

THE CHILD PRAYER

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SUNDAY

JAMES WELLS, D.D.

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CHILDREN'S
SUNDAY*

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Addresses to the Young on the
Lord's Prayer

BY

JAMES WELLS, D.D.



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THE CHILDREN'S SUNDAY.

BIBLE STORIES WITHOUT NAMES.

*With Questions at the end of each Chapter
and the Answers in a separate booklet.*

BY THE

REV. HARRY SMITH, M.A.

THE CHILDREN'S PRAYER:

Addresses to the Young on the Lord's Prayer.

BY

JAMES WELLS, D.D.

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TO
THE BOYS AND GIRLS
TO WHOM
THESE ADDRESSES WERE DELIVERED
THIS BOOK
IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED
BY THEIR PASTOR

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No. I

OUR FATHER WHICH ART IN HEAVEN

A FRIEND one day gave me a jewel, which I now hand on to you. It will be more mine if it also becomes yours. My friend said something like this: the Lord's Prayer has in it all the relations in which we stand to God. It begins with the highest and comes down, step by step, to the lowest: like Jacob's ladder, its top is in heaven and its foot on earth. It embraces the whole circle of our duties, wants, and desires. The Christian prays as—

- I. A CHILD: *Our Father which art in heaven.*
- II. A WORSHIPPER: *Hallowed be thy name.*
- III. A SUBJECT: *Thy kingdom come.*
- IV. A SERVANT: *Thy will be done in earth.*
- V. A BEGGAR: *Give us this day our daily bread.*
- VI. A SINNER: *And forgive us our trespasses.*
- VII. A SINNER ENCIRCLED BY TEMPTATION AND EVIL:
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Three pleas are added—

1. DO THIS, LORD, FOR IT WILL HELP ON THY KINGDOM : *Thine is the kingdom.*
2. DO IT, LORD, FOR THOU ART ABLE : *Thine is the power.*
3. DO IT, LORD, FOR IT SHALL BE FOR THY GLORY : *Thine is the glory, for ever.*

The prayer closes with a grand Amen.

You can easily remember this explanation, if you start with the highest and climb down to the lowest. Child is the highest, and sinner is the lowest—lower even than the beggar begging his daily dole.

You should greatly desire to understand these wonderful words which are used oftener, I daresay, than any other words in the English language, and which are very dear to the hearts of countless millions. We may describe them as Tennyson described the Parables—"perfection beyond compare."

You hold as sacred the first prayer you learnt at your mother's knees : how much more sacred is this prayer, all the words of which have been given you by Christ ! How sweet and beautiful ! Through our study of them may Christ teach us how to pray.

The Christian begins to pray as—

- I. *A child* ; for he says, "Our Father."
- II. *A child from home* ; for he says, "Our Father which art in heaven."

I. A CHILD.

This is the highest of our relations to God. Heaven and earth know no tie nearer or dearer than that between father and child. For Jesus Himself is the Son, and Father is His favourite name for God. He uses it seventeen times in the Sermon on the Mount. You must then reverence your father on earth, for there is something divine about him, and he wears one of the highest titles of God. He is twice over in God's image—both as a man and as a father. If you don't reverence him, you can't rightly reverence God, or yourself, or anyone. The Lord's Prayer thus clothes your earthly father with supreme honour.

How awful is our lot if there is no God; if, as one puts it, when we look up to heaven, we see not a loving eye, but only a hideous, empty eye-socket! How lonely and desolate the human heart must be that does not believe in God, but feels a perishing outcast in a fatherless world, orphaned for time and eternity! Many a one in this case has feared life more than death, and sought a guilty refuge in self-destruction. "All the world is but as one orphanage without God."

I was speaking lately to an organ-builder.

He could not understand how any man could look on this world and doubt for one moment whether it had a maker. "Only a madman," he said, "would tell you that my organ had just grown into its present shape, or that Fate, or Destiny, or the laws of nature had built it. But what a poor bit of work my organ is, compared with the earth, the sea, the sky, and man!" It was a good argument and a good illustration. Yes; you feel in your heart of hearts that this world and yourself must have had a Maker. And to you He is not the Great Nameless, far-off Someone; for Christ has taught you to say, "Our Father." He is more than your Creator, Law-giver, and Judge. If you are a pupil in Christ's school, you will never think of God only as a Stern Judge. For every one who loves Christ calls God "Father." "Our Father which *art* in heaven"; which *art*, not *wast* or *art to be*. You should feel very sure of God: He is, and He is in heaven: He is also on the earth, and very near at hand: He besets us like the encasing air.

A God who is "Our Father" seems an utter impossibility to nearly all the heathen. They believe that their gods can do them much harm, but no good. This is their whole divinity. Theirs

are not religions of love, or grace, or trust.

God is the Father of all men by nature ; for " we also are His offspring." He is " the Father of our spirits " as well as the Framers of our bodies : our spirit is nearer Him than our body : our spirit is the part of us that is likest God. But a child may become a rebel and an outcast. God's touching lament is, " I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me." Maybe you have known a bad son. He has changed his name, and for shame fled over seas. His name is now never mentioned at home ; his photo, with many bitter tears, has been slipped out of the family album ; his school prizes have been locked up out of sight ; and he is breaking the hearts of father and mother. Such a son was the Prodigal. He fled from the best of homes, took to a swinish life, and would soon have perished had his mind not been changed. He only is a child in the full sense of that blessed word, who gladly trusts in and tries to be like Christ, the Father's Holy Child.

Think how a child turns to, leans on, uses, and rejoices in, his father. To a healthy-hearted little child, the father is even as a home-god : he seems so very kind, so wise, so strong. To him he clings and cleaves ;

towards him he has no doubts or fears, or half-faith. Now, God planted a father's love in your father's breast, and it must be like something in His Own bosom, else we could not truly call Him "Our Father." Your father's love is just a drop from God's ocean. From faith in a human lover and helper you should rise, as by easy stepping-stones, to faith in God and Christ. You should thus rise from home to heaven that you may draw down heaven to your home. You may thus find heaven at your mother's feet. You trust, you love, and you obey your father on earth ; pray that you may carry up all these fine feelings, each of them at its very best, up to your Father in heaven. This is true religion ; for the love due to God and the love due to your father are blended into one, and called by the one name of piety. "Let them learn," says St Paul, "first to shew piety at home." This outgoing affection should guide your spirit to your Father in heaven.

I saw lately that some one had been speaking of "Our Father-Mother God." The Romanists worship Mary, the mother of Christ, because they yearn for a mother's heart as well as a father's. But we have both in Our Heavenly Father. For God says in Isaiah (lxvi. 10), "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you" ; and in Deut.

xxxii. 11 He compares Himself to the mother-eagle when she carefully trains her nestlings for flight. God is the All-good as well as the Almighty.

The other day I came across a fine story in a magazine. The late Thomas Erskine of Linlathen once met a shepherd on a Highland hill, and asked him, "Do you know the Father"? The shepherd knew what the stranger meant, but, as he could not answer Yes, he turned away to his sheep and left the question unanswered. But though the stranger went, the question remained and haunted the shepherd till he could answer it rightly. After many years the stranger and the shepherd met again among the hills. The shepherd knew him, greeted him heartily, and said earnestly, "I know the Father now."

These two words, "Our Father," hold enough for all our needs. I quote here two of the greatest of the sons of men. The night before his death, Dr Chalmers was walking in his garden, and was overheard by one of his family, in low and earnest tones, saying, "O my heavenly Father, O my heavenly Father." The last recognisable words of Mr Gladstone were "Our Father." What the Christian said as he entered the Kingdom of Grace, he may say again as he enters the Kingdom of Glory: "I will arise and go to my Father."

Thank God, then, that the Lord's Prayer is a child's prayer. His Kingdom is in child-like hearts : the childhood of the heart is the manhood of the soul. "Little children," says Martin Luther, "are professors in Christ's College." Do not think that you could pray better if you were full grown. A child's spirit is the spirit of true prayer ; the child, as well as the man, can say, "Our Father."

You also pray as—

II. *A Child from Home, or a Pilgrim*: "Our Father which art in heaven."

We know that God is everywhere, and yet all men have somehow turned to the highest heavens as His special dwelling-place. "Heaven" is from "heave," and means that which is lifted high above us. The repose, the depth, the boundlessness of the sky, and its remoteness from earth's ills and rude noises have seemed to mark it out as God's peculiar home and ours. This, of course, is only after the manner of men. God is in heaven, and you are on earth. A child's home is his father's house ; he can have no other.

Thus a Christian sings, "Heaven is my fatherland, heaven is my home." For him who lives without God, the strange land beyond the grave is homeless.

A keeper of a cemetery told me that one

day he found a poor little girl lying on a newly-covered grave. She was a friendless orphan, and she begged him to let her alone, as she wished to die, and join her mother. She knew the poet's meaning—

“Though love is all of earth that's dear,
Its home, my children, is not here :
The pathos of eternity
Does in its fullest pleasure sigh. ”

What thoughts rush upon the heart when for the first time one sees clearly that he must die some day, that his well-beloved father and mother must die, and that he must quit his bright home and this fair earth. One can never forget that strange hour : life can never be quite the same on the other side of it. One feels then as if all he trusted in on earth had been shattered. He is like the German traveller, Alexander von Humboldt, when he had his first earthquake. It was in a town in South America. The house he was in began to creak and fall about his ears. He rushed out, hoping to find shelter in the bigger buildings, but they were already in ruins. He then lifted his eyes to the hills, but they were staggering like drunk men. He ran towards the sea ; but, lo ! the sea had fled. He saw the bare keels of the ships in the mud, and the ground under his feet was reeling and quaking. He then felt that he

could never again trust anything on earth, however solid it might seem. When every hoped-for refuge had failed him, in his despair he looked up, and saw that the sweet blue heavens were unmoved. Thrice, seven times blessed are all they who can say at such an hour, "Our Father which art in heaven," "Thou hast been the home of Thy people in all generations." Long, long ago it was noticed that idol-worshippers in Rome and elsewhere, when overtaken by some great calamity or fear, did not turn to their idols and temples, but looked straight up to heaven and cried, "O God," "Good God," "God in heaven." Humboldt did so; I have often seen people doing so; and I remember soul-moving times when I did so myself. That shews what God made us for. The Greek word for a man means, it is said, "the looker-up." Though man often looks down to the earth like the beasts, in sore straits his first and true nature returns and masters him, and then he must look up. Again, every man has a strange restlessness and mysterious yearnings. These prove that his nature is far too big for this little planet: they are, as some one has said, home-sicknesses for heaven.

If you believe that heaven is your home, you should have none of those nameless fears

which torture the hearts of many when they are in a serious mood. I lately listened to a beautiful sermon by an Indian Magistrate. His text was, "our citizenship is in heaven." It means just that heaven is our home. He told us how he had lived for many years in India, as an exile whose home was in Scotland. The hope of reaching his home had brightened every day of his life in India, and roused him to do his very best. In a very happy way, he showed us how all this illustrated the power of the heavenly home over the Christian's life on earth. Happy is he who, amid all the dark things around him, can say, "I know whence I came; I know what I live for; I know where I am going to."

It can do us no good to blind our soul's eyes to the fact that earth cannot be our eternal home, as the people in some novels do, for, so far as the story goes, they never die. For earth is only earth, and our bodies are perishing; and therefore our souls must have a better home than earth can supply. Our home on earth gives us a feeling of possession and permanence only so long as we do not think about it. I was saddened when I examined lately the beautiful picture in a book of table talk. Two fine fir-trees stood out in the foreground with surprising

distinctness. Behind them a little boat was sailing over a river, and beyond lay a mist which blotted out everything. That picture was a true preface to the book ; for, though the aged writer recorded the death of most of his comrades, not one plain word was spoken about the land beyond the river. For our comfort we need more than the brightest things on earth can give us. This is how Ruskin closes one of his books about Turner's pictures : " Oh ! that someone had told me in my youth, when all my heart seemed to be set on these colours and clouds that appear for a little while and then vanish away, how little my love of them would serve me, when the silence of lawn and wood, in the dews of morning, should be completed ; and all my thoughts should be of those whom, by neither, I was to meet no more."

How very bright a place the heaven of the Bible is ! How sweet and satisfying the verses describing it ! And children, I notice, are very fond of singing hymns about heaven. And yet it sometimes seems a far-away and awful place to them. These words, " Our Father which art in heaven," should rescue us from such unhappy feelings. Heaven should grow more real and near to us as it receives one and another of those we love

best. Something in your love for them makes you sure that you are not parted for ever. Your hearts refuse to believe that they have taken an eternal farewell of you. Their homegoing has made heaven more solid and homelike to you.

This petition should deeply stir the heart of the orphan and the fatherless. They, beyond all others, should cast themselves on the Fatherhood of God. In his book on "The Lord's Prayer," Dr Stanford gives a good story. Dr Jonas King was once addressing a school of little orphans.

"How many of you have no father?" he asked. "Answer by holding up your hands."

Up went a forest of little hands.

"So you have no father?"

"No," they said.

"Now say the Lord's Prayer."

They began, "Our Father which art in heaven—"

"Stop, stop," said the doctor; "is that right?"

They began again, "Our Father—"

"Stop again," he said. "Did you say, 'Our Father?' Yes, you are right; you have a Father. I want to speak to you about Him."

He told them the story of the love of God.

The Lord's Prayer was not quite a mystery to these orphaned infants.

O God, send forth the Spirit of Thy Son into our hearts, so that we may ever say unto Thee, Abba, Father. Amen.

No. II

OUR FATHER WHICH ART IN HEAVEN

(Continued)

LAY the emphasis now on the first and last words in the petition : *heaven* and *our*. The prayer begins not with "my Father," but with "our Father." You are to pray not as an only child, or a solitary child, or a selfish child, but as one of God's great family. Christ teaches you to own, not some far-off cousinship, but brotherhood and sisterhood with your kind. And you are to remember that your home and inheritance are in heaven. When you rightly use the first petition you thus pray as—

I. A Child.

II. A Child from Home.

III. An Heir.

IV. A Brother.

Our last sermon was about the Child, and the Child from Home. We shall now study the suppliant as an Heir and a Brother.

Every Christian is a child of God, and this

is no empty title without an estate. The Apostle argues, "if children, then heirs." The poorest Christian on earth can claim "an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away" (1 Peter i. 4). No estate is real that does not run into eternity. The Christian does not take his inheritance from others, nor can others take it from him. He is his own heir: no other can come after him.

This is a very wonderful truth, and we should often think about it. "Thou art a man," says an old writer: "how great a name if thou knowest thyself." Every child of God should remember that the very highest nobility belongs to him. He is very near of kin to God. He should be careful to do nothing unworthy of his nobility. A friend one day saw a young nobleman misbehaving at a railway station. An aged man went up to him and said, "You have forgotten that you are the representative of the noble house of ——." The youth was abashed and ceased from sully-ing a noble name. "Tell no lie," Darius said to his son, "for you may one day be king." What a life the Christian might live if he always acted *now* with a view to *then*! We greatly need that self-reverence which scorns to do any deed of shame. Nobility obliges the noble to live nobly. When tempted to do any doubtful thing, you should ask yourself,

“But is this worthy of one who wears the name of Christ?” All the sons of God should bear themselves right nobly.

I want you to note well the first word in the Lord's Prayer—that little word *our*. No one is to sunder himself in prayer from his kind, as if he were the only inhabitant of a lighthouse on a lonely rock far out at sea. Nor is he to pray only for his own family, like that man who, we are told, used to pray, “God bless me and my wife, our John and his wife: we four, and no more. Amen.” Nor is he to pray only for his own country. One German writer on the Lord's Prayer quotes this verse from an old Socinian hymn-book: “Give rain and sunshine for Greiz, Schleiz, and Lobenstein; and if others also wish them, they can ask for themselves.” If our hearts go up in true prayer to God, they must also go out in warm affection to all men. For “have we not all one Father? Hath not one God created us?” Had we had many creators we might have had many castes. Every child of God should have the family-feeling. Being loved much, he loves much, and he loves many. It was said of a famous Scot that “he treated every man as if he were a blood-relation.” It is very plain that Christ wishes us to think of others every time we pray. That word “our” is also fitted to destroy

pride, for it reminds us that we are not better than others, and that we must all take the same lowly level before God.

Four big barriers separate people from one another, and hinder them from saying, in the spirit of Christ, "Our Father." These are Colour, Race, Creed, and Class.

I. *Colour*.—Climate gives varying hues to the skin. Some are thus white, black, brown, red, yellow, and copper coloured. The white races are just now the most powerful, and whites are thus tempted to despise others. But it was not always so: the Egyptians and the Arabs once ruled the world. Children in our streets sometimes gather around foreigners, reproach them with their colour, and shout "niggers." This feeling rules in the Southern States of America, some six or seven of which have lately passed laws forbidding negroes to ride in the same cars with the whites. Many white men in India and Africa behave most shamefully to their coloured fellow-citizens, and make their lives bitter by scorn. No wonder that mutinies and murders have been fostered by such evil behaviour. The great David Livingstone used to say that it was a very dangerous thing to despise the manhood of the humblest savage. I cannot tell you how much some most admirable coloured people I have known have suffered in our

own country, simply on account of their colour. I can scarcely wonder that they feel tempted to give up all faith in God and all respect for man. It stung one to the heart to be asked by them, "Where is your Christianity?" Some who think themselves educated and refined are completely under the power of this mean, vulgar prejudice. You remember the vision of Peter at Joppa. He saw "a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth." And the lesson of the sheet was, "God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean"—a hard lesson for many. We are all in the same heaven-descended sheet; we are all enfolded in the same fate; we are all frail and perishing; and the same future awaits us. "God hath made of one blood all nations of men." Whatever their hue, their heart-blood is red, and it courses through the veins in the same way: their souls are of the selfsame stuff and colour. But, alas! blood is not always thicker than water. "Kind" is a shortened form of "kinned," and teaches us that as all are of the same kind, they should be kind to one another. For God has fashioned our hearts alike. All have the same great human experiences: all must eat and drink and sleep and die and be judged.

It does one's heart good to brood over the mystic mighty ties which bind together all the children of human kind. Christian politeness treats gentle and simple alike, and never makes the least favoured feel their inferiority in our presence. It is God who has made us to differ. Much of the genius of our religion lies in that text, "honour all men." Christ has given us a new idea of man, and it applies equally to kings and cobblers. None are low-born, for all are heaven-born. Every man has God's patent of nobility. The humblest has a soul which is worth more than all the things your eyes can see or your hands handle, and the last among men may be first in that great day. These words, "Our Father," train our sympathies to overleap all the distinctions of colour, and embrace the far-spreading race of men.

II. *Race.* — Historians prove that race-hatreds have caused rivers of blood to be shed on battle-fields. These hatreds have been handed down from generation to generation. They have been kept alive by ridicule, by war-songs, by popular lies, by laughter-moving stories, by mimicing pronunciation, &c. The pride of race and contempt of others, which are the unfailing marks of barbarians, flourish often in the most civilised

nations. The Jews honoured Hebrew, not human nature, and the Greeks and Romans despised all other nations. And there is no end to the outgrowths of this spirit. One city slights another; and in the same city the East End and the West End despise each other. In my boyhood the scholars of two schools in the same parish used to quarrel about the merits of their schools, and, boy-like, came to blows over it. In their village feuds they were just imitating the ways of rival nations and of great statesmen.

Very foolish is it to scorn or taunt any race or large class. Ours is a greatly favoured race; but what could we have done if we had been born in, say, Turkey? People are now saying very hard things against Turkey. But the massacres we deplore are the work of a mere handful of Turks. Those who know Turkey well will tell you that the Turkish peasants, when let alone, are decent and kind-hearted, and that many of the educated Turks are heart-broken by the miseries of their native land. Others are not to be blamed for their race, nor are we to be praised for ours. Our privileges are our responsibilities, of which many make empty boasts, and so turn them into judgments. Shun that love of country which hates other nations.

And we should remember what foreigners

can say against ourselves. They declare that the large cities of our beloved land supply some of the saddest sights under heaven. These things should humble our rude pride of race.

The early Christians had a beautiful way of rebuking narrow thoughts about other races. Sometimes the Good Shepherd was painted in the catacombs bearing a kid or goat in His arms instead of a lamb. That kid represented the outcasts of mankind.

Let these great words, "Our Father," teach us to hate all race-hatreds.

III. *Creeds.* — Creed-hatreds and church-hatreds, like race-hatreds, have dug deep gulfs among those who use the Lord's Prayer. Our creed is what we believe, and with the whole heart should we believe what we hold to be true. We cannot be creedless. But many who bear Christ's name differ about the meaning of some of Christ's words, and thus His church has many creeds. The strifes from differing creeds are among the saddest things in the world. Some sixty years ago there was a dispute about the keys of a door in the church of Bethlehem, which is supposed to mark the spot where the angels at the birth of Christ proclaimed "Peace on earth and goodwill to men." The Greek and Latin monks fought with each other about the keys till their blood reddened the church

floor, and their bullets riddled the sacred pictures on the walls. The Czar of Russia and the Emperor of France took part in the quarrel, and our own country was drawn into it. We are told that about one million of men lost their lives through that one war. Yet most of those who were fighting used these words, "Our Father which art in heaven."

The spirit of Christ teaches us not to hate or despise those who belong to a different church from our own. We should be willing to remove error when we can, but this should always be done in the spirit of Christ. You know the story of William Tell, how he sent his arrow whizzing through the heart of the apple on his boy's head. It was beautifully said of a Christian teacher that he, like Tell, could send the arrow of his argument through the heart of an error with such tender precision that he did not touch one hair of the man who held it. The superstitious and foolish notions of others might easily have been our own, had we been brought up as they have been. There may be many in the best churches who are not true followers of Christ, and the worst churches in the world, no doubt, have many who, though amid the mists of error, truly worship God, and are accepted of Him. Our sympathies and our

prayers should embrace them all every time we say, "Our Father."

IV. *Class*.—This prayer rebukes every unworthy class-feeling. You have read about caste in India. Native Indians can never get out of the class in which they have been born. Their cruel and godless religion teaches the Brahmin to despise and shun all in the castes beneath. But it is said that, in some circles at home, caste is nearly as strong as it is in India. I once heard an interesting description of the social life in a little manufacturing town. Class-feelings separated the landlords from the mill-owners, the foremen from the clerks, the workmen from the day-labourers and from one another, the apprentices from the message-boys, etc. The servants in rich men's houses are often as deeply exercised about questions of rank as are the lords and ladies upstairs. And false pride is mighty even among paupers. Sometimes the missionary finds that a poor woman in the garret, who has two chairs, considers herself quite superior to her one - chaired neighbour. Separation from others because of their evil ways is, of course, totally different from the poor pride of place and birth. So far has contempt for the poorest gone that the French call them "the doggery," and some at home call them "the herd."

You will likely be sorely tempted to honour the rich because they are rich, and to slight the poor only because they are poor; or, at least, to give too much honour to the rich and too little to the poor. He who knowingly does this, so far denies the faith of Christ. For He teaches us to honour men, not for what they *have*, but for what they *are*, and for what they may become. You should not honour a rich man unless he has gained his wealth honourably and uses it nobly. Sometimes men are passing poor and God's poor because they are noble, and rich because they have behaved ill. It will need much care to keep yourself right in this matter. It needs much grace to value the poor saint more highly than the worthless millionaire. We must take care that we are not lovers of gold more than lovers of God. Let us not be among those who, in one sense, live according to the golden rule, as they measure all things by gold. Wealth should often be called illth. It is very foolish, as well as very un-Christian, to scorn or neglect the poor. The wheel of fortune never stands still, and those at the top are going to the bottom, while those at the bottom are rising to the top. Some of our navvies can read Greek and Latin, and have been educated at our best universities.

Men of noble birth are driving cabs, and doing humbler work than that. A man who returned to one of our great cities, after twenty-five years' absence, found that most of the leading families he knew in his youth had disappeared, and that their places had been filled by the sons and daughters of poor men. This change is going on all over the world.

You must include the very poorest—the outcasts—in your prayers. Leave them not on the doorstep of your Christian sympathies. The most broken and forsaken is, at least, a man, a man for all that, and he may become a man of God and an heir of glory. We must discover the man in men, and the immortal under the rags of the beggar. Honour the Maker in His masterpiece, however sadly it may be marred. Scorn all scorn of our fellow-men, for it is a sign of a base mind, and the noblest deal not in it. The noblest hearts often beat under rags, as in the case of that little boy who, waiting with his barefooted sister for the opening of a hall, took off his cap, laid it in the gutter, and made his sister stand on it.

If you are ever tempted to be harsh towards the weak and the little, remember Joseph's brethren when, in Egypt, they stood

trembling before the very man they had cast into the pit. You should be chivalrous towards the helpless—that is, you should shield them in a big-minded and unselfish way. We don't need, now-a-days, the chivalry which the poets ascribe to the knights of King Arthur's Round Table. They rode gaily forth to rescue some lady who had youth and beauty, and gold, and a famous name, and a grand castle. The chivalry the world needs now is the spirit which is ready to succour such people as Christ healed and saved in the days of His flesh. Standing among these, we are to say, "Our Father."

Christ wishes us to rise above all the divisions of colour, race, creed and class, and to be kindly to our kind. "Every man for himself" is not the law of the Kingdom. He who cares only for "Number One," as the saying is, has not the Spirit of Christ. Little idea of Christ's spirit had Montaigne when he wrote, "With reverence be it spoken, I love only myself."

"He lives for himself, he thinks for himself—
For himself, and none beside ;
Just as if Jesus had never lived,
As if He had never died."

The golden rule is, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Now, thou lovest

thyself well. In spite of many faults, you still love yourself. You never speak evil of yourself, or hold yourself up to scorn, though you often could do so with splendid effect. Again, God loves you, and you should love what God loves. But God loves your upper self, not your under self; your true self, and not that false self which is made up of evil passions. Because God loves your higher self, He seeks to kill your lower self. You are to love yourself in that God-like fashion, and then love your neighbour as yourself. Thus the highest self-love and neighbour-love will find their common root in the love of God. It is very easy to love some of your neighbours—the rich, the kind-hearted, the social,—but you are to love all. You are to love your friend in God, and your enemy for God. Love to man thus grows warm in the love of God. You see here God's amazing goodwill to man. He might have claimed all our love, but He wishes to share it with our fellows. Love of man seems to be nearly as acceptable to Him as the love of Himself.

And love teaches us how to pray. If we really love others, we shall have many desires for them which only God can fulfil. And thus we must pray to Him for them, even

as we pray for ourselves. "He that minds but himself in prayer," an old writer says, "doth not mind himself rightly. If thou prayest for thyself alone, thou alone prayest for thyself." The old Jewish proverb runs, "He that prays for another is heard for himself." "And the Lord turned the captivity of Job when he prayed for his friends" (xlii. 10). True self-love should make us love others and pray for them. The world sorely needs an incarnation of Christ up to date. The secret of it lies in those oft-used words, "Our Father which art in heaven."

No. III

HALLOWED BE THY NAME

CHRIST teaches you to pray first as a child, and then as a worshipper. The angels are worshippers, but not children ; they are in the second rank, but not in the first : “ for unto which of the angels said He at any time, thou art My son ? ” The child’s place is the highest ; the worshipper comes next. The leal-hearted child wishes his Father’s name to be hallowed and His Kingdom to come. Do try to understand the words in this first petition, for some, we fear, use them with as little knowledge as they do, who recite their paternoster in a dead language which they do not understand, and sometimes recite it backwards as a charm against evil. I have read about a boy who always said when repeating the Lord’s Prayer, “ Harold be Thy name.”

God’s name is God’s nature, or rather the little bit of it we can know. God’s name stands for God Himself : what you do to the name you do to God. At political meetings

some names are cheered and others are hooted. In that way people shew their feelings to the men whose names are mentioned. Hallowed is just *holyed*; that is, held and treated as holy, honoured as is meet.

This petition comes first, because if we do not rightly reverence God's name, our whole religion must be cracked from bottom to top and from side to side. Profane words must destroy every vestige of real piety.

This petition suggests three things, though it says only one thing. We pray *against* all idolatry and against profaning and neglecting God's name, and we pray for hallowing the great name.

Passing by the idolaters at present, this petition divides men into three classes—

- I. The Profaners.
- II. The Neglecters.
- III. The Hallowers.

I. THE PROFANERS.

Profaning is the very opposite of hallowing. "Profane" means before or outside the fane or temple: from *pro*, before, and *fanum*, a temple. Inside the walls around the temple lay the sacred, undefiled garden, the loveliest spot in all the land. But the unwall'd ground outside was common, and trampled bare by the foot of man and beast. Esau was "a

profane person": his life was all spent outside the sacred enclosure, and he profaned every hallowed thing, treating it as cheap and vile.

This petition is against profane swearing. It turns into a prayer the third commandment: "thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain." Men may hold him guiltless, and he may hold himself guiltless, but the Judge of all will not. God, you see, has given us a whole commandment, and a long one, against such swearing. He forbids it as strictly as murder. It is very hard for many to believe this, for the sin of swearing is not keenly felt by thousands who shun other sins. Very strange it is that scarce any other name is so dishonoured as the blessed name of our Father in heaven. Hate profane words. What good can they ever do you? Little Esaus there are in most places, rude boys who sell their birthright for less than one morsel of meat, and think that horrid oaths are manly.

"Maintain your rank, vulgarity despise,
To swear is neither brave, polite, nor wise;
Immodest words admit of no defence,
For want of decency is want of sense."

The Red Indians have not one single oath in their mother-tongues. They do swear now,

but they swear in English and French. Their wonderful reverence for the Great Spirit kept their language undefiled by profane words. What a burning shame that in many countries Britons have nicknames borrowed from their favourite oaths. Profane words are the first English words which are caught up by the boys in some foreign lands, and almost the only English words they use when you meet them. Cowper, the poet, tells that a Chinaman, hearing an Englishman using the name of God so often, took him for an eminent saint, and begged an interest in his frequent prayers. Dr Kane, the famous Arctic explorer, had three laws on board his ship—implicit obedience, total abstinence, and no profane language. Dr Nansen tells that when he crossed Greenland, his two Lapps swore much, but never when in danger. They were like some of whom an old writer says, "Mariners are calm in a storm and storm in a calm." How very foolish and cowardly! And how absurd swearing often is! You hear men swearing at large, cursing horses, tools, the weather—anything. A poor man in the hospital under Sister Dora was swearing in pain. "No more of that," she said. "But I must say something, lady," he replied. "Well, say poker and tongs, poker and tongs; but not another word of that." "Are things better?" an officer

asked a sergeant during the awful days of the Crimean war, as Kinglake tells us in his history. "They are, sir," was the reply; "the men are beginning to swear again." Under the influence of the nurses swearing then disappeared from the hospitals as by a spell, "as if the worship the wounded soldier owed heaven and his nurse were blended into one sentiment." How silly it is to be proud of swearing! Two preachers were once in a hotel in Canada, where a cowboy was proudly practising horrid oaths. One of the preachers, whom I know, said quietly, "I have been lately among the shoeblacks in Toronto, and if you practise a little longer you will by-and-bye be able to equal them." A laugh arose, and the cowboy's swearing was hushed.

That was a noble testimonial which was given to the late Dr Scott of Blantyre. His football club in Edinburgh were anxious that he would continue their captain, though he wished to retire. They offered to give up all swearing on the field if he would remain with them. He did so, and they kept their word.

Shun all oaths, great and small, for they gain a terrible hold over people. If you practise faulty grammar and pronunciation in your youth, you will find it very hard to correct your mistakes. They will cleave to you, mock all your efforts, and become a piece of

yourselves. Habits of speech are wonderfully sullen and stubborn. There are well-educated people who, in spite of themselves, must add an *h* at the beginning and an *r* at the end of some words. The man can scarcely wholly unlearn the oaths he learnt as a boy. Even Peter, with the taste of the Communion wine on his lips, began to curse and swear. His old oaths when a sailor boy on the Sea of Galilee came back upon him. A dying saint told me that he was horrified by the oaths of his boyhood escaping from him in his spasms of pain. Boys and parrots very soon learn swearing, because swearers put so much heart and soul into their oaths. They thus strike and stick. But men and boys can conquer this wicked habit, though they sometimes say that they can't, and that they need it as a safety-valve for passion. For they never, or very rarely, swear before their mothers or wives, or preachers, or people they stand in awe of; they hold that man to be a rude boor who would do such a thing. If they can conquer profanity then, they can conquer it always.

I earnestly advise you to shun all little minced oaths, such as "by Jove," "by George," "for the love of God," "goodness gracious," Love pure, sweet, simple Saxon, and avoid everything that even seems to

unhallow or dishallow God's name or make it common. Be careful to utter no word that is either base or doubtful. Remember, too, that some people curse God and man in their hearts, though they do not allow their cursing to get beyond their teeth. "They bless with their mouth, but they curse inwardly."

"Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,
Uttered or unexpressed."

And so is swearing. We speak of ejaculatory prayer, that is, prayer which is never put into words, but is *shot up* straight from the heart to God. There is also ejaculatory swearing. Let us hallow God's name in our hearts, and then swearing, uttered or unexpressed, shall become impossible to us. A purified fountain will send forth only pure streams.

I cannot mention all the ways by which men profane the name of God. Turning over the pages of a new book, I noticed that the foolish author had written God with a small *g*. But he honoured the names of all his friends with a capital letter. Tennyson, in his dedications to the Queen and Prince Albert, uses a capital *H* even when he speaks of Him and Her, or His and Hers. I can understand that boy who, after he had read the book of Job, said, "Satan is very mean, and after this I shall always write his name

with a little s"; but one is shocked by the spirit of those infidels who are so eager to parade their profaning of the holy name.

II. THE NEGLECTERS OF GOD'S NAME.

The profaners have sins of commission, the neglecters have sins of omission. They simply do nothing; they just let God alone. Many people seem to do this very thing every day. If they were quite sure that there is no God, they would not need to change any of their ways. It is not fair to say that they live like heathens, for almost all heathens have been and are most religious. The greatest ruins and buildings in heathen lands are the temples of the gods, and a glance at them convinces you that they were built by reverent men.

In Egypt, for instance, the temples are the only buildings of ancient days, except the tombs, of which a trace now remains. The sun has never shone on grander buildings than these temples once were. These ancient Egyptians did their best to hallow the names of their gods. Their religion was by far the grandest thing they had.

Accompany Paul on his mission tours. Did he find any neglecters of religion? When he healed the cripple at Lystra, the heathen folk believed that the gods had visited them.

At once the priests brought garlands and oxen to the gates that they might offer sacrifices. How prompt they were to hallow the names of their gods! And how liberal! Behold them bringing their most costly and beautiful things—oxen and garlands. We know that these oxen were the fairest and fattest and cleanest in all the land. They were white, and they were coaxed to go willingly to the altar without thongs, as they believed that the gods would not accept any offering that was defiled or unwilling. Paul's spirit, you remember, was stirred within him when he saw the city of Athens wholly given to a false religion. Athens then was a perfect forest of statues and temples in honour of their gods. These were of the finest marble, covered with gold, and the masterpieces of men of genius. The streets were choked with pedlars selling little images of the gods. These were taken home and used for family worship. Ephesus was as religious as Athens. The splendid temple of Diana there was one of the seven wonders of the world.

And how very religious millions of heathens are to-day! Think of the temples of India, Burmah, China and Japan; think of the multitudes who give up their whole life to religious duties. I read that a merchant in Bombay wished to atone for his sins. He

had himself and his wife weighed, and gave their weight in silver to their idol-temple. These heathen shame millions in Christian lands. We may well offer up the poet's prayer, "Oh for a pagan zeal in Christian hearts."

From the Profaners and Neglecters, we gladly turn to—

III. THE HALLOWERS OF GOD'S NAME.

I cannot make God's name holier than it is; but I can hallow it by treating it as it ought to be treated, and getting others to join me in this. I can hallow it by heart, by lip, and by life.

All true hallowing must begin in the heart and work outwards. "Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts": if we do not sanctify Him there, we cannot sanctify Him anywhere. I sanctify God in my heart when I turn to Him with childlike awe and trust. "My son, give Me thy heart," is His appeal to me; and through Christ Jesus, and by the aid of His Spirit, I can gladly give myself to Him. All other hallowings flow from that.

I hallow God with my lips when I confess Him as my Father in heaven, engage in His worship, and sing His praise. Every act of worship is a hallowing of His Name, and

some ways of worship have more hallowing in them than others. During worship in the early Church, the pastor used to cry out, "*Sursum corda*: lift your hearts to heaven"; and also "*Hoc age*: do this one thing; put all your soul into it." Worship means worthy-ship: it is the way of publicly owning the infinite worthiness of the All-worthy. It is the treating of Him as He ought to be treated: it is the loftiest admiration and adoration.

By my life I can hallow God's great name. By glad and unfailing obedience to His will I pay homage to Him. My work thus becomes worship; every meal is as a sacrament, every day as a Sabbath, and the whole life is an offering upon God's altar. The first petition singles out worship as the highest work of man. From it every good work should flow.

The mother of two little girls had a frightful temper, which often filled them with terror. But she was converted. One day the younger girl came home, having her pinafore all covered with mud, and expecting a dreadful beating. But the mother quietly gave the child a clean pinafore, and a "piece," and a kiss, and told her to join her sister at play. The mother had been teaching the child the first questions in the

Catechism about God. The astonished little thing looked up in her mother's face and said, "Mother, if God's like you, I love Him." Most admirably had that mother hallowed the name of God.

"Hallowed be Thy name": does it say on Sabbath, in the church, or at the school? No: it does not say where, or when, or how; for it means everywhere, every way, and always. It is a missionary prayer. It breathes the desire that all idols may be cast down, and that all the children of men may worship as the dear children of our Father in heaven, so that the Great Name may be hallowed far and near. You cannot really add to the brightness of the sun; but yet, in what is called a relative way, you may increase his glory by letting his light into dark corners from which it is now shut out. Thus, to spread God's kingdom by a single hairsbreadth is to hallow His name. He who uses this prayer must do his best to have it answered. "Have mercy upon us, O Lord, and incline our hearts to live more nearly as we pray."

Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

No. IV

THY KINGDOM COME

THIS is the First of May. Both in pagan and in Christian lands May-day has been celebrated as a glad festival. Millions have risen before the sun that they might go a-maying, as the phrase runs. They rushed to the fields in merry groups, revelled in their fresh beauty, drank in the sweet morning air as drunkards drink wine. The earth had on her holiday attire, and they were in their holiday mood. They washed their faces with the May dew, believing that it had all the powers of magic, and that it would give them fresh strength and beauty. They also gathered the fragrant hawthorn blossoms, wherewith they garlanded their houses.

May is also the month of increase and abundance, for it is crowned with the promise of harvest. The word May, they say, comes from the same root as major and the Scotch mair.

God grant that in the great things of the soul you may be to-day like those who go a-maying. Arise early in the morning of life

and bathe your being in heaven's dew, that it may abide with you to life's end. God shield you from all the bitter east winds that hinder the blessed dew from falling upon you. Wait not till the heats of the world have parched your soul. Give yourself gladly now to all that is fresh, pure, fragrant, and beautiful. Gather whatever is fairest and weave it into garlands for the adorning of your home. May this birthday of Summer be also the birthday of holy resolves and desires. Let the religion of Christ make you like those who keep healthful holiday all through life. As heaven's smile is drawing forth beauty and fruitfulness from the cold earth, so may the love of God create in you all graces and good works. Those who watch your growth with eager interest will then discover in you the promise of a rich harvest. That you may not disappoint their affectionate desires, imbibe largely heaven's sunshine, and ever pray as Christ hath taught you.

Having prayed as a child and a worshipper, you next pray as a subject: "Thy kingdom come." What is a kingdom? The word explains itself, for it gives us two words in one; it is the king's dominion, that is, all the persons and things under the king. And who is the King? He is "Our Father." And we pray that this kingdom may come, for we may

be far from it even in this Christian land ; and even where it has come, it may have only a little of the power it ought to have. It is the same as Christ's kingdom. God is king of Nature, of nations, of all ; but His kingdom in the hearts of men is His in the highest of all senses.

You are to pray that this kingdom may come—

I. Within you.

II. Around you.

III. The wide world over.

“ The kingdom of God is within you,” Christ says. It is an empire of grace and truth, and it has to do first of all with the heart. Till that has been gained nothing has been gained. The very first thing it does is to lay siege to the soul.

“ The kingdom, that is myself, the king,” said Louis XIV. of France. His courtiers called Louis XV. “ France,” as if the king were equal to the whole kingdom. “ All the Roman Empire centred in Rome, all Rome in the palace, all about the palace in Caesar.” So says Gibbon. These words are literally true of the kingdom for whose coming we pray.

We have to do two things with the King : we must yield to Him, and we must be loving and loyal subjects.

A kingless man cannot be a happy man, for

man was made to be a subject. Deep down in every man's heart lies what we may call the instinct of royalty, the craving for a king. Very wonderful are the proofs of this in the pages of history, ancient and modern. Millions seem to have made almost a god and saviour of their king. They yearned for some one far above them, who could satisfy their need of trusting and loving; and thus their loyalty to their earthly king became a sort of religion. They gave to earth's kingdom what was meant for the kingdom of Christ. It is not so very long ago since people in our own country, both learned and unlearned, believed that the king had a divine charm about him, and that he could heal diseases by his simple touch.

Christ's Kingdom leaves no room for neutrals to stand upon. A neutral is just a *neither*: he is neither for nor against: you can describe him only by what he is not: he wishes to be neither for Christ nor against Him. In ancient Greece and Rome the man who was a neutral in time of war was declared to be infamous and was made an outcast and an outlaw. Near Niagara there lived, in the time of the Red Indians, a tribe who were called "the Neutral Nation," but the tribes on both sides of them rose against them and swept them clean away. The kingdom of Christ makes no provision for neutrals, for it

claims all. The Kingdoms of Earth do the same when they are strong enough. More than 800 years ago, a new Kingdom came to our land. William the Conqueror then drove out the Saxon king. The nobles fought against him, but at last they saw that it was useless. One noble came after another bowed low before the Conqueror's throne, laid down his sword and shield, the weapons of his rebellion, kissed the king's hand, and said "*Devenio vester homo*, I become your man"; this is the origin of our word *homage*. Each of us by yielding should become Christ's man, and pay homage to Him. We are to kiss the Son, and give ourselves up to Him as our King. We are then to live as His loyal subjects. We are to yield with good will, and, as an old writer says, with one thousand good wills.

"For know, nor of the terms complain,
Where Jesus comes, He comes to reign,
To reign with universal sway ;
E'en thoughts must die that disobey."

The French have a very fine apple which they call "le bon chretien," that is, the good Christian, because it never has the smallest touch of rottenness at the heart : it is fair without and sound within. The Christian should be like that apple.

At a soiree the other evening I tried to

turn all the objects on the table into parables and divine images. Our religion, I said, should be like the variegated crocuses on the table. The sun had come to them, and strangely stirred new life at their roots; and they had broken up through the dull cold earth, and flung themselves open to the sunshine till they had received from it a wondrous beauty in stem and blossom. The fruits and flowers yielded a delicious perfume to which every part of them had contributed: it was an influence streaming from the whole life of the healthy plant. The confections were sweetened through and through—there was no sour spot in one of them. The fire had warmed, and the sugar and cream had sweetened and coloured, every drop of tea in the tea cup: and the tea had given its own genial warmth to the cold clay of the cup, and through the cup to the hand that held it. Like the sunshine in the flowers, like the delicious fragrance in the fruits, like the sweetness in the sweetmeats, like the warmth in the full cup, like the sugar and cream in the tea; like all these, the grace of the kingdom should spread through and through the heart and the whole life. It must drive out chaos and rebellion, and bring in the reign of love.

I will give you a prayer used by one noble subject of the Kingdom. On his last birthday

on earth but one, David Livingstone wrote in his diary : " My Jesus, my King, my life, my all, I again dedicate my whole self to Thee." One of the most beautiful of our children's hymns has this prayer :

" Fain I would to Thee be brought,
Gentle Lord, forbid it not,
In the Kingdom of Thy grace,
Give Thy little child a place."

You wish the Kingdom to come also

II. AROUND YOU.

For you the centre of the kingdom is your heart, and from the heart it must spread to the home. We sing often " Home, Sweet Home." But children can make home sweet or sour. Selfishness, disobedience to parents, evil temper and naughty words often poison all the springs of home life. If you honestly pray this prayer, you must do your utmost to have all these evil things banished. I was reading lately about a girl whose influence was compared to the ottar of roses—a most delightful and penetrating perfume which sweetens the whole atmosphere of the house. She created a climate which gave joy to all who breathed it. This was her way of doing what she could to answer the Lord's Prayer. A.L.O.E., Miss Tucker, a famous missionary

and maker of books, "when a girl, examined her features in a mirror, and resolved that, since she never could be pretty, she would try to be good, and prove a blessing to the world." The path she trod lies open to every girl.

The boy who makes this prayer his own will fight against every evil thing in his school. With all his heart will he hate lying, cheating, swearing, and bullying. His anger will flash forth like lightning when a big boy shows cruelty to a weak or a little one, and he will thus raise the tone of the school. Every school needs the coming of the kingdom in it, and it can come only by the help of the scholars.

In your circle and parish you will, as you grow up, find many things that need mending or ending. The Kingdom is at daggers drawn with all that is crooked, mean, unjust, or harmful. When you use this petition you "pray that Satan's kingdom may be overthrown." Think of drunkenness. Won't you do all you can to lessen it? What a world of misery it is bringing upon us, and how it is poisoning the lives of millions! You have read how little eight-year-old Hannibal laid his hand upon the altar of his gods, and swore that all his life he would fight against the chief foe of his land. We need thousands of boys and girls who are like Hannibal. If our boys and girls cherish this fine spirit, better

days must come to our dear country ; for the children of to-day are the makers and masters of to-morrow. Of an ancient tribe it was said that other nations went to battle but they went to war : fighting was the one employ of their lives.

The true subject of Christ is a soldier who needs to be always fully armed and always at war. For you can get no substitute in, and no leave of absence from, the army of Christ. Each should put this question to himself, " Am I doing anything to hinder the kingdom ? What am I doing to help it ? "

We wish the kingdom to spread

III. THE WIDE WORLD OVER.

The petition, " Thy kingdom come," does not narrow its sphere. It means, let it come wherever it can—everywhere. The Lord's Prayer teaches us boundless desires, and it should beget in us the spirit of home and foreign missions. The days in which we live have added fresh meaning to it. For we are nearer the heathen than we ever were. New steamers, new telegraph lines, new railways, new canals through isthmuses, new tunnels through mountains are bringing them nearer to us every day. No part of the world is now foreign to us ; for our ships are sailing in all the seas that are not frozen. Our age

is telegraphic, locomotive, and in perpetual motion. And in many ways the heathens are nearer us than they used to be. By travels, books, pictures, photos, we know them well, and can even see them. Visions of them are thus often given to us. We know their many miseries, which only the kingdom can cure. Then some of their religions are bankrupt and doted, and are losing respect among millions of the heathen. Ever so many temples are no longer wind-and-water-tight, and are now crumbling away. In many places they have made bonfires of their idols. They did so in Madagascar in 1869. Dr Mackay of Formosa tells that he was lately visiting some villages in wet cold weather. He was chilled at night. But the people soon warmed both his body and his soul. They brought armfuls of their wooden idols and flung them on the fire. Among these idols were some graven images of the most popular goddess in China, the goddess of Mercy. Of all the idols in that land she is the one who comes nearest Christ. But they turned from her when they learnt about the mercy of God in Jesus Christ. The sunlight had swallowed up the poor starlight.

Those who speak the English tongue are now loudly called to spread the kingdom. Chiefly by them the Bible has been translated

into nine-tenths of the languages of the race. About one-third of the whole world is now under English-speaking men. It seems that the greater part of the world will one day read, speak, and think English. God has given us the love of travel and the universal language. He has also given us the highways of the world, and so calls us to be missionaries. And God will judge the heathen and us according to our light.

The other day I heard a missionary from Livingstonia in the heart of Darkest Africa. His tales were enough to make one sick and give one a headache. A chief he visited had a woman whose work it was to take out men's eyes. He was very fond of music, and when he got a good musician he had his eyes put out lest he should go to another chief. No young man was allowed to join the honoured band of warriors till he could prove that he had speared at least one man.

But even there the kingdom is coming with power. The children had to be paid at first to come to the school. After they had learnt two or three letters they said that they were tired, and went home and rested for a week or a fortnight. But now they are coming to the schools in hundreds, and are paying for their education. Many of them have given up their heathen ways, and are sincerely try-

ing to follow Christ. In that land there are many salt bitter lakes. The reason is that they have no outflow. But some of the great lakes, like Nyassa and Bangweolo, are full of sweet water, because they are sending forth streams that enrich the land. The religion which has no Christ-like outgo is like these bitter lakes, while the religion which desires to help others is kept sweet and wholesome. The Arabs in that region are very religious and also very wicked. Their mother tongue has no word for love or grace. They perish of soul-famine, and we have bread to spare.

“Thrice are we the debtors of the heathen world. Debtors, for we possess what they have not. Debtors, for we have kept back for centuries what we should have given with generous hand. Debtors, for instead of a loaf we have often given a stone, instead of a fish a serpent.”

We may treat missions with antipathy, apathy, or sympathy and support. Some dislike them and speak against them, and others simply take no notice of them. How can these people ever say the Lord's Prayer? Sympathy and help may be expected from everyone who prays “Thy kingdom come.” Some may be above, as others are beneath, discussing missions. “We never talk about missions. We are trained for them, and live

for them," a Moravian once said. The spirit of Christ is the spirit of missions. Many of the heathens shame our coldness in this great work. Canon Tristram, in a book lately published, says that he saw a great temple a-building in Japan. The stones were raised by fifty-three strong ropes of fifty feet each. These ropes were made of women's hair. Some 250,000 Japanese women had their hair cut, and sent it to the priests in token of their sympathy with the effort to build a new temple. One cannot help being interested in a religion that can draw forth such touching services. If all who pray the Lord's Prayer had that spirit, do you not think that the kingdom would soon come with power at home and abroad?

The history of our own country should give us hope in offering up this prayer. Our own painted forbears seem not to have been much better than the heathens now in Africa or the South Seas. Cæsar describes their gigantic stature, fair complexion, enormous bodily strength, and love of ornament. He tells how the women, with streaming hair, helped the men in battle. One old writer also says that he saw the Scots eating human flesh. In a church in the Highlands I found these words: "Jesus Christ is my Druid." That carried me back nearly 1300 years. When

Columba came to Scotland, Druidism was the religion of the country, and some say that the priests then offered up human sacrifices. But Scotland does not hold one Druid to-day, and the Gospel of Jesus Christ has made all this difference. You might gather similar facts from all Christian lands. All these conquests teach us to pray with hope, "Thy kingdom come," as it has come already into thousands of the strongholds of heathen darkness. Christ does not teach us useless prayers, and He has said to all His followers, "Go ye, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, . . . and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Amen.

No. V

THY WILL BE DONE IN EARTH
AS IT IS IN HEAVEN

THE worshipping child prays as a subject, and also as a servant. A servant is a step lower than a subject. A duke is Queen Victoria's subject, but he is not therefore her servant: he obeys her laws, but is not therefore asked to do her will. As the servant of God you say, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." May God's good spirit guide us while we try to unfold this petition.

It teaches us—

- I. *What is to be done*: Thy will.
- II. *Where it is to be done*: In earth.
- III. *How it is to be done*: As it is in heaven.

The what, the where, the how: that is the plain track for to-day's thinking.

I. WHAT IS TO BE DONE.

It is the will of our Father in heaven. Oh, then, God has a will for us. A nameless power, mere law or fate, has no will: these

are only blind, heartless forces. Christ in this petition does not mean God's will in nature and providence, but what God wishes to be done by our wills. For we can know God's will, and we want to do it; for it is our Father's will, and we wish to live as His obedient children. And we wish the whole of it to be done. Thy will—all of-it—be done, is our daily prayer. How wonderful that God has a will about the like of us; that He is at such pains to let us know it; that He not only pardons us, but takes us into partnership, and asks our help, so that His will may be done! For

“God cannot make men's best
Without best men to help Him.”

What wonders lie in the commonest words of Christ!

You must begin by taking God's will and making it yours. “What wilt thou have me to do?” was the first question of Paul when Christ met him. Your will is most your own of all things, and it is the gift God asks from you. There is an interesting book on “The Fifteen Decisive Battles in the World.” But for us there is only one decisive battle—the battle, or rather the duel, of the wills. To most Christians there came a time when this battle had to be fought out to the very

end. The two wills clashed against each other, and the question was, which would win. This battle is often bitter and long, and sometimes it has become a war lasting through life. How mad ! The idea of a frail perishing man waging war with heaven ; a creature defying his Creator ; a child at strife with his Almighty Father ! When God's love prevails we cease to strive. We are then brought into the yielding frame of mind, and pray with the full consent of the soul, "Thy will be done."

After this the greatest of all battles, the most decisive battle in the life of some, is that between a child's will and his mother's. Many a little child has an amazing will-power. Sometimes there is a pitched battle between the naughty child and the mother, and it lasts for days. The little rebel yields, and then renews the strife. In many cases this battle is fought before the child is two years old. Of course some children have naturally very gentle and sweet tempers, and obey their parents heartily from the very first. They almost seem to have been "born before the fall." Some there are, too, who cannot remember the time when they did not trust and love Christ. But the heart of most is a rebel to begin with, and the wild will needs to be tamed. The child who fights against the will of father and mother cannot truly

say, "Thy will be done," for obedience to a parent is a part of the will of God. The child who gladly yields to his father should find it easy to obey the will of his Father in heaven,

When you take your Father's will as your own, you find that He has a plan of life for you. Christ has made this plan very plain. You are to accept it in all its parts, and try to carry it out. For you are not to be mere thinkers, or dreamers, or idlers, but strong doers. "Whatsoever the Lord saith unto you, do it." You are to do God's will "with a will," as we say; with goodwill; yes, with ten thousand goodwills. True greatness lies in heartily keeping God's laws; meanness, in breaking them. With what heartiness our soldiers volunteer for any foreign service. An appeal was made to a Scottish regiment at Windsor for volunteers for the last Ashantee war. The officer asked the volunteers to step forward. He left them for a few minutes till they had decided, and when he came back they were all standing in a line. "What," he asked, "are there no volunteers?" He was then told that every man had volunteered. Christ's army is made up of volunteers, that is, *willers*, people who have a will and use it well. There are no forced recruits in the sacred army who do God's will. You may reject this service;

you may, for you have a will of your own. But you must serve : whose servant will you be ?

God's will embraces both suffering and serving. The sufferer has usually the hardest part. What can he do but try to imitate the Great Sufferer who in Gethsemane prayed, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me. Nevertheless, not My will, but Thy will be done." Christ here practises what He teaches in the Lord's Prayer ; for He calls God "Father," and He prays, "Thy will be done." If we do as He did, an angel will minister to us also. It is not sinful to mourn ; but we must try not to mourn overmuch or murmur in a rebellious spirit. It should do every sufferer good to take a quiet walk in Gethsemane. We notice that the bitter cup did not pass from Him, and that He was "exceeding sorrowful," and "in an agony." We need not wonder, then, if in our hours of sorrow we also should, like Christ, be in great distress when our desires are not granted to us. Christ has hallowed natural sorrow even when it is very great. We, too, may fear, and yet not sin in our fear. Many a Christian sufferer has often had to use such a prayer as this—

"Bear with me, patient God of Job,
Bear with thy weakly child,
My thoughts are fevered with my grief,
My heart is growing wild."

We are now to enquire—

II. WHERE GOD'S WILL IS TO BE DONE.

An old farmer once showed me a corner of his farm that was given over to nettles, briars, and rubbish. With a strange laugh, he told me that it was "the Devil's Corner." In olden times superstitious people used to set apart a corner to the devil as a bribe—usually a useless corner—in the hope that he would not blight the rest of the farm. We wish the whole earth to be God's well-cultivated farm, without one devil's corner in it. The kingdom does not allow one acre for devildom or Satanism.

Near this church lies a plot which is called "The Devil's Churchyard." It got this name, I suppose, because some of the soldiers killed at the battle of Langside were buried there in soil that had not been consecrated by the priest. The sea is the burying-place of countless thousands, and yet we do not call it "the Devil's Churchyard" though it has not been consecrated by priests. No: to the Christian the whole world is "God's acre," "consecrated ground"; "for the earth is the Lord's."

A friend wished to plant a mission among the miners in a valley in the Wild West of America. The leaders there were enthusiastic volunteers in Satan's army. They made all

the people promise that they would not let a house for the mission or lodge the missionary, and they gathered together all the Bibles in the valley and made a bonfire of them. They forgot that such a bonfire is apt to kindle a conflagration which burns all that is best in society. These wild men desired that God's will should not be done in their corner of the earth. Our desire is that on no acre or foot of the earth may the will of devils or evil men be done. Christ teaches us to claim all earth as God's parish.

This prayer is very deep as well as very wide. It means that God's will should be done in every home—in kitchen, sitting-room, and bed-room, in the garret and in the cellar; also in every shop and workroom; in every school and playground; in every den and cave inhabited by man; in every mine; on every icefield and cornfield; in every ship at sea from stem to stern, from the keel to the mast-head: we pray that God's will may be done wherever there is a man, woman, or child to do it, and as long as our little planet holds together.

Christ does not teach us to pray, Thy will be done on earth and in heaven. For only the doers of God's will are in heaven; and as this very petition shows, they do it perfectly there. I can find no prayer in the Bible for

those who are in the unseen world, but are not in heaven. It seems that we are not encouraged to pray for those who have gone beyond the bounds of earth and this present life. "May he rest in peace" is not in any page of the Bible. The words on the tombs in the Catacombs are "in peace," not "may he rest in peace." As Christ does not bid us pray for the dead, all the more earnestly should we pray for the living. "Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation."

Some would cut off the half of this prayer. "Thy will be done on earth" is the motto of many who want great changes on earth, but who do not care much about heaven. We wish to take the whole prayer as it came from the lips of our Lord. He wishes earth to be like heaven, and man like God, and so, having told us the what and the where, he adds the How.

We shall now consider

III. HOW GOD'S WILL IS TO BE DONE— "AS IT IS IN HEAVEN."

Some think this may mean as it is done by the sun, moon, and stars—without hasting, without resting, without jarring and blundering. Sweetly, smoothly, and beautifully God's will is done in the skies. What a parable, what a reproach heaven is to earth! But

these bright planets are will-less, and God wishes His will to be done by free agents who gladly choose and prefer His service. Our perfect model then must be among the good angels and their comrades, the saints made perfect in glory. But the saints are "even as the angels," and we shall therefore find our pattern among the angels. We might find it also in Christ, for when on earth He showed us by his life how God's will is done in heaven. But we keep close to His words when we study how God's will is done by the angels. I may say, in passing, that we are not to pray for judgment upon any, however wicked; for that work is not done in heaven. Study now the *will*, the *work*, and the *ways* of the angels. Their will fixes their work, and their work creates their ways of working.

Evidently their will is blended with God's. In everything they say Yes to God. The angels that fell said No. "He who destroys his selfwill destroys hell," says St Bernard. The selfwill of the evil angels made hell. When selfwill is destroyed heaven enters the soul. The angels accept all God's will: they do not make a selection among the Commandments. We are to imitate, but not to worship them. David did so when he said, "Then shall I not be ashamed when I have respect unto *all* thy Commandments." That writer

understood this who prayed that God would tame, evangelise, and angelise his will. Christ's words teach us the enormous importance of a right use of our free will. This makes all the difference between angels and fiends. "My will be done" is hell begun on earth. "Not Thy will but mine be done" is hell itself. "Not my will but Thine be done" is heaven. Luther must have had the spirit of the angels when he wrote these bold words: "I do not ask Thy will be done, but my will be done. For Thy will is now my will, and I best get my own will by unquestioning acceptance of Thine."

The work of the angels is the daughter of their will: the work of men and angels is just their will-power in action. The angels are all ministering spirits who serve God in heaven and man on earth. They seem to be the leaders of the heavenly choir. They stand round the throne, ready to go on God's errands. And though not of our race or nature, they bear heartiest goodwill to man. They are evangelists who bring to earth the good news of God's mercy, and they rejoice over the returning prodigal. They watch over the children, the weak, and the tempted. They may help us in ways we never dream of. It was a fine fancy of the poor slaves that they got all their sacred songs from the

angels. They console the sufferer; for an angel appeared in Gethsemane, strengthening our Lord. They also visit God's saints in their last hours and convoy them through the gate of death to their eternal home. And they do all for love, and nothing for reward: their reward is in the good they do.

Dante tells us that he was greatly impressed by the radiant beauty of the angels he met in Paradise. This heavenly beauty was just love made visible. Of one of them he says—

“Its will to pleasure me,
It signifies by brightening outwardly,
As one delighted to do good.”

He adds that it

“Became a thing resplendent in my sight,
Like a fine ruby smitten by the sun.”

This is, as the hymn sings, “angels’ work below.”

The Bible teaches us not a little about the angelic ways of working. A Sabbath School teacher once asked her class, “How is God’s will done by the angels?” A girl answered well, “they do it without asking any questions.” They are humble workers. Except Michael and Gabriel, no one is marked out by their names. They are willing to serve

unnoticed by their fellows, nor do they carve their names on their work. They never wait to survey in triumph their achievements. The only names of angels we know bespeak humility; for Michael means "who is like God," and Gabriel means "the servant of God." Angels' wings denote the swiftness with which they do God's errands. In the same way the Romans gave wings to both the head and feet of Mercury, the fabled messenger of the gods. The angels are also likened to the wind and the fire, for these are among the swiftest things in the world, and the most spiritual. It is their way to put forth all their strength in the work of God. The archangels are represented as being all wing and voice—for swift service and adoring praise. How they shame all laggards and loiterers in the work of Christ.

You know that you cannot do God's will as well as the angels. If you could, you would be an angel, and not a boy or girl. "Do this like a man," a teacher once said to a boy, who replied, "I cannot, sir; I can only do it like a boy." The Christian hopes for, not equality with the angels, but the same quality in his service. For the spirit of obedience must be the same among all who have a free will. Our ideal, as people call it, is angel-like service; and this high ideal

helps us greatly, though we know that we can never reach it. As the poet puts it—

“And evermore the end will tell,
The unreached ideal guided well.”

Or, as another says—

“The thing I meant to be,
And was not, comforts me.”

Your copy-book has a copper-plate line at the top. Your writing is never as good as that head-line, but its broken likeness to it shows that you are really copying it. You do write better by having so splendid a model before you. As you get near the bottom your writing sometimes grows worse, because your own poor lines above draw your eyes away from the perfect head-line. The more you keep the copper-plate before you, the better you write. And you must not be discouraged by blots and failures; but you must begin again with a steady hand and a determination to do better.

You thus see that you are not asked to be manly, or neighbour-like, or a hero-worshipper. All these models are on earth, and they are shut out by the words, “As it is in heaven.” But if you like that phrase, “be manly,” make sure of your man. Choose the only perfect Man the world has seen, the Man of men, the

Son of Mary ; for He came to show us, in flesh and blood, how the Father's will is done in heaven and should be done on earth. I daresay it is enough for you here to remember that you must really love God's will and be a constant imitator of the Lord of the angels. Three hundred years ago there was a school of great painters and sculptors in Rome, whose masterpieces have never been excelled. They coined a phrase which has ran round the world : they said that they did their work *con amore*, that is, with love. We cannot do well the work we hate or dislike, but true love draws out and increases all our best powers. When very pure and strong it makes real geniuses of everyday folk, and creates the highest possible degree of excellence. Love is the grand secret of all Christian service.

“Thy kingdom come : Thy will
In earth be done in love,
As saints and seraphim fulfil
Thy perfect law above.”

Our Father in heaven loves us, and Christ has shown us how great His love is. That redeeming love should kindle grateful love in our hearts, and then that love will out in the doing of our Father's will. To whom, with the Son and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, now and evermore. Amen.

No. VI

GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD

A BOY of four once refused to say his prayers. "Why," he explained, "they have grown old to me, and God has heard them so many times that they are old to Him too." Like that boy, you may sometimes wonder why you should repeat the selfsame prayers every day.

But think. We need to be trained as well as taught. The old Romans were among the best soldiers the world has ever seen. They knew perfectly every part of their drill. Yet even their veterans—their oldest and best soldiers—had to go through all their exercises every day. From this fact the Roman army got its name of *Exercitus*, that is, Exercise. It was not enough for them to know perfectly, they must be able to practise all they knew. They had to keep every muscle and joint supple and ready for victory at a moment's notice. This is the reason why you must repeat your devotional exercises as

these splendid soldiers repeated their military exercises.

One of the greatest musicians once said, "If I give up my preparations for one day, I know it; if for two days, my friends know it; if for three days, everybody knows it." Yet he knew every note as perfectly as a man could. His difficulty was to practise what he knew. You must pray every day if every part of your soul is to be as strong and supple as the body of the well-drilled soldier, if your spirit is to be kept in tune and produce such grand music as comes from the voice of the perfectly trained musician. Without daily practice the soul gets out of order and is robbed of all its sweet harmonies. Truth must be oft repeated because it is often written on the heart as you write your names on the yielding sand on the shore, which is washed out by the returning tide.

"Why do you pray every day for daily bread?" a little girl was asked. "Because we want it fresh," was her wise reply. Without faith in God men may come to their meals just as cows and horses do.

You are to pray as a beggar. There are many kinds of beggars, but the humblest of them all begs for his every meal. You belong to this class, for you pray, "Give us this day our daily bread."

Of the seven petitions, five are for the things of the soul, and only one is for the things of the body. We pray first for the things of God—Hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done—and after that we pray for things belonging to ourselves. So long as we have bodies we need bread, for we cannot live without it, and we must live in order to live well. Nothing needful for His children is uninteresting to our Father in heaven. "Children, have ye any meat?" was one of Christ's questions after He had risen from the dead. Christ's teaching is not

"Too high
For sinful man beneath the sky."

This petition cannot be selfish or earthly if we have the spirit of the first three petitions. The Germans speak of bread-scholars and bread-saints. The bread-scholars love learning only for the bread and butter it may bring them, and the bread-saints think they love Christ while they love only his loaves and fishes. You must have bread if you are to do Christ's work in the world. God cares for your body, and there need be no sordid taint in your prayer for bread. "Bread and games" was the prayer of the Romans; "God and bread" should be ours.

This is the prayer:—

- I. Of Faith.
- II. Of Modesty.
- III. Of Honesty.
- IV. Of Charity.

I. THE PRAYER OF FAITH.

It voices a child's faith in our Father as the great giver for both soul and body. "Man," it has been said, "is not a cow or a horse, but he is among cows and horses, and must eat with them; therefore when he is fed, he rightly lifts up his head above them." Only think how many wonders lie in the bread we eat. The seed and the soil must agree; the sunshine and the shower must suit. How miraculous is the growth of the grain in all its stages! Millions of forces must work sweetly together before we can have a single slice of bread. A single night's frost in summer might spoil all our harvests, storms might ruin them.

The heathens said that grain was the gift of Ceres, one of their great goddesses; that she gave them the seed, and taught them how to sow and reap, and turn the grain into bread. This is why we call bread-producing seeds *cereals*. And men of science tell us that these seeds cannot be grown from wild grapes

as some other seeds have been. In a very special way they are the gifts of heaven.

Then how delightful it is that we have a fresh supply every year. I am told that when harvest begins we are within a few weeks of starvation. If the harvests of the world were delayed for a month millions would probably perish from lack of bread. Remember, too, that God answers this prayer by giving your father work to do and power to do it, wisdom and freedom from disease. God also gives you a good appetite, without which bread could not nourish you. You pray for bread and for everything that makes it "the staff of life" to you. "Give us," you say, meaning that you shall never have it unless He give it to you.

How shameful and sinful it is to waste bread, the good gift of God! They are not far wrong who firmly believe that want will sooner or later overtake every waster of bread. You may notice that bread is often flung on the streets by our beggars. "Waste not, want not," is a true proverb.

We thus have "corn from heaven," manna, and angels' food. It is well, then, that in imitation of Christ you should say grace (that is, thanks) before meat. It is quite true that you should say grace every day for twenty things besides bread; but it is also true that,

if you don't thank God for bread, you are not likely to thank Him for anything. Food is to be received with thanksgiving (1 Timothy iv. 4), all the more as we have few acts of worship in daily life. Your bread is a great miracle, and it lies at the foundation of your life. It is also "a mercy," for you cannot claim it as a matter of right. The thought of the giver should sweeten your every morsel, and make each meal a sort of love-feast and sacrament. The quaint old German grace before meat runs: "Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest." But now it is usually left to the servant girl to say, "A blessed meal time," or "a good appetite." Burns' grace before meat is good:

"Some hae meat wha canna eat,
And some wad eat wha want it;
But we hae meat and we can eat,
Sae let the Lord be thankit."

These are beautiful words about the early Christians: "They did eat their bread with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God." Such, I am sure, was the spirit of that poor woman who used to ask a blessing in words of her own composing: "O God, I thank Thee for the porridge; I thank Thee for an appetite for the porridge; and I thank Thee for a covenant-right to the

porridge." Gratitude is the sugar that sweetens all our food.

This is

II. THE PRAYER OF MODESTY.

It says nothing about clothes and houses: in warm countries these cause little trouble. It asks only bread, only daily bread, only our daily bread, enough for us. Luke puts it, "Give us day by day." Our learned men have been puzzled about the exact meaning of this word *daily*. It is, say they, "the bread of our necessity," "the bread for supporting life," "our necessary bread," "our sustentation bread," "the bread which pertains to our being and life."

It is bread only, not dainties, or flesh. Very rarely indeed did the people in Palestine taste flesh. James speaks of "a day of slaughter," that is, a day on which they slaughtered a kid or lamb. But such a day was a great and rare event in their simple lives.

The bread in Christ's day was mostly from rye or barley. The lad, you remember, had two barley loaves. You may see women baking such loaves in Palestine to-day on cinders or hot stones. They are hard, like our oatcakes. Thus at the Lord's Supper they were broken, and not cut, and "the breaking of bread" was their phrase for a meal.

Millions of people to-day would warmly

bless their easy lot if they were just sure of daily bread all the year round. In Russia, India, Africa, and the South Sea Islands, multitudes live on the very edge of starvation, even in their years of plenty. We read in the newspapers about bread riots. Ever so many live on roots, nuts, and leaves, and such husks as swine do eat. Some of the hill folk in India live for three months in the year on the blossoms of trees.

Famine now and again attacks millions, and so steels their hearts that they leave their little children to die of hunger on the roadside. In France, before the Revolution, peasants were found dead with grass in their mouths; they could get nothing else to eat. Our great cities have children who sit in winter in breadless, fireless rooms, apart from the happy ones of the earth. I have known some of them who found out a way of holding their sides which dulled the gnawings of hunger. You do not know that you are born, as the saying is; you have no idea how greatly favoured your lot is; you cannot be too thankful to the Giver of every good gift; you are the darlings of Providence. The idea of not having bread to eat can scarcely enter your mind. You are like the French Queen, who, when told that the people had no bread, replied sharply, "Then why don't they buy cakes?" I read about a

poor starved London woman who, on getting one day to the seaside, thanked God that for once she saw something of which there was more than enough.

Think how much more you get every day than bare bread. Antiquaries tell us that our ploughmen are far better fed and housed than kings were 600 years ago.

None of us would be content with bare bread. We sympathise with the little girl who enlarged the petition thus: "Give us this day our daily bread, and, if you please, butter too." We have the spirit of a farmer mentioned in "The Days of the Fathers in Ross-shire." He paused at this petition, and earnestly added, "But, if Thou wilt give us more, we are quite ready to receive it." This "table-prayer" should check our natural love of luxuries. It teaches us that we should not live to eat, but only eat to live.

If you have only plain food, do not complain. Doctors tell us that deaths from starvation are commoner among the rich than among the poor. By over-eating many rich folks destroy their power to eat. A big book might be written about many famous men—among them Cæsars and kings—who have died of their favourite luxuries. A skilful physician advises us to make out a

list of the sweets and delicacies we are very fond of, and then vow never to taste them. Temperance gives us the joys of health, which far excel all the joys of the glutton. Those who should know best tell us that many of the people in our asylums were over-indulged in their childhood. Daniel and his companions were fresher, fairer, and fatter than all the young princes in the palace, though they lived on pulse or porridge. One of the places visited by the children of Israel in the Wilderness was called Kibroth Hataavah, the Graves of Lust. Many died there of over-eating. It is to be feared that earth holds many Graves of Lust. It fills one with terror to be told how many die of wine and whisky. If you are wise you will take that dreadful risk out of your lives. And many of our doctors warn us that not a few ruin their health and shorten their days by much smoking, especially when they begin in boyhood. The joys of health are a thousand times better than all the poor joys you can get by creating needless appetites.

Christ, you see, expects you to have a prayer for daily bread and daily grace. It should be as hard for you to go a day without prayer as without meat. Your life is a daily need, and should be a daily prayer.

"Lord, for to-morrow and its needs
I do not pray ;
Keep me, my God, from stain of sin
Just for to-day."

This Prayer is for

III. THE BREAD OF HONESTY.

It is for *our bread*, not another's; bread which belongs to us, and which no other can fairly claim as his. There is a homely phrase about a man who cheats his neighbour. The cheated man says, "he has taken the bread out of my mouth." On board a big steamer it was once said in my hearing that only one man drank wine at one of the tables. "Ah, yes," a gentleman replied, "but it is my wine he is drinking, for he has cheated me out of a lot of money." No man can expect a blessing on the bread which rightfully belongs to another. Ill-gotten bread poisons the soul of the eater. Better is a dinner with herbs honestly got than a stalled ox which has been stolen.

God, our bread-giver, has laws, and we must work along with them. Paul counsels the Thessalonians that "with quietness they work, and eat *their own bread*" (2. Thess. iii. 12). He also says (ver. 8 and 10): "Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought. . . . For this we commanded you,

that, if any would not work, neither should he eat." The great Apostle in this was simply imitating Christ, who, as a carpenter, or rather, an upholsterer, implement-maker, or artisan, wrought for His own bread and His mother's. Only he who earns, owns his bread. None should expect that miracles will supply us with the bread of idleness. We should wish to eat only the bread God gives and blesses; and for most people that is the bread they have won by their honest industry. When the pagans wanted bread by dishonest means, they prayed to Mercury, the god of thieves. Bread on which we dare not ask God's blessing is to us like bread we have stolen.

But this lesson is not so much for you as for grown-up people. The spirit of it, however, should be strong in you even when you are children. Cherish now every noble feeling of independence and honest industry. And when you grow up, lay the accent and stress upon that possessive pronoun *our*, and make it personal—*my own* daily bread. Make sure that you have a God-given right to the bread you eat. There are other ways of earning it than by the sweat of the brow. If you have wealth, remember that wealth has its duties, and that you should regard it as wages paid in advance for the good work

you mean to do. "Own" and "owe" come from the same root. Never suppose for a moment that you are licensed to enjoy all good things without working for them. Be like the rich and virtuous woman in the Book of Proverbs: "She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness." That is a grand text for those who have not to work for their bread: "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." They never can be happy who are only enjoyers and consumers of the fruits of the earth. These sluggards are dwarfs, and not men. They are dull-souled creatures who miss the good of life. I have read that spiders of a strange breed abound on the sugar plantations in Cuba. They were originally beautiful and nimble bees with wings, but in an evil hour they discovered that they could get sugar without working for it. Their wings and higher powers gradually decayed, and they came within the sweep of the stern laws of God, which punish all drones and idlers and parasites. Every one of these is a monument of God's vengeance upon the do-nothings. Among all creatures, man included, God's laws are in force. If you are to be rich, I beseech you to choose some real work, and do it with all your might. Then will you discover the full meaning of this prayer of

Faith, and Modesty, and Honesty—"Give us this day our daily bread."

This is also

IV. THE PRAYER OF BROTHERLY LOVE.

The word *our* has, or may have, two meanings: it may mean *our* and not another's, not taken wrongly from him; and it may mean *our* as not mine only but as embracing all the children of our Father in heaven. Like the other petitions, it is a social, not a selfish prayer: it breathes the Spirit of Christ, who has taught us to pray for others, even as we pray for ourselves.

I wish to say three other things to you about our bread. To eat God's bread makes you God's guest. If you take it in the right spirit, you are in God's tent, and have divine guest-rights. This bread thus pledges for you all God's bounty. If in Bible lands you eat the bread of a chief, you thereby become his friend, and he will defend you to the last drop of his blood. Here is the secret of David's joy and hope in the 23rd Psalm: "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies." Such divine hospitality moves him to say, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."

The eating of God's bread also binds you to all who eat it along with you. Companion means a bread-fellow (*con*, together, and *panis*, bread), just as chum is a shortened form of chamber-fellow. You and all God's children are bread-fellows. God has made you so, for you are all canopied over by the same tent and share the same heavenly hospitality : you eat of God's bread and drink of God's cup.

This prayer is not for the bread of the soul, but it suggests that better bread. In one of the longest of His reported addresses (St John's Gospel, ch. vi.), Christ links together the bread for the body and the bread for the soul. He finds great fault with those who labour for the bread of earth, and care not for the bread of heaven; who, instead of finding in the bread a heavenly sign, find in the heavenly sign only perishing bread. He wishes us to rise from the perishing to the ever-during bread. I may do it in this way : God has wrought millions of miracles to provide bread for my body ; will He do less for the bread of my soul ? How bounteously He gives me this bread. Will he deny me that ? No. He is always at the giving point, but often I am not in the receiving mood. If the God-given prayer is answered in the lower region,

it will not be rejected in the higher. I cannot believe that the God who has provided bread for us can mean ill to the soul. He who gives golden harvests to those who don't pray for them, will not refuse the bread of life to those who beg it in the name of Christ. As He counts the soul greater than the body, so the bread for the soul, I may be sure, will be freer and more abundant than the bread which perisheth.

We praise Thee, O Thou bounteous Bread-giver, for the living bread which came down from heaven, of which, if a man eat, he shall live for ever. Lord, evermore give us this bread.

No. VII

AND FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS

THE Greeks and Romans of the old world were very fond of a being who was the offspring of their own fancy. He had all the looks of a young man—beautiful, strong, good-natured, full of fun and tricks, with splendid laughing eyes. Everybody liked him. But he had no conscience, and only a part of the reason of a man. A creature wholly given up to pleasure and heedless of others, he looked back without remorse, forward without care or fear, and upward without worship. His chief end in life was to eat and drink and amuse himself. Hence he was as glad as the frisking lamb or kitten, the capering foal, and the young goat. While he seemed a perfect young man, he was really only a fine animal. For, had you examined his body, you would have found a hairy tail hanging down from his back—a sure token of his race. That was the reason why he had no sense of responsibility, no idea of debt to God or man. He was called the Faun.

May there not be faun-like young fellows in

our Christian land ? Are there not many who never think about God, nor Christ, nor the soul, nor the Hereafter ? Such can never earnestly pray, "Forgive us our debts."

As beggars we pray, "Give us this day our daily bread," but this petition takes us a step lower yet: we are to pray as sinners, "Forgive us our debts." The forgiven beggar stands far higher than the unforgiven king. Forgiveness is thus the great need of the soul, as bread is of the body.

When you unroll a map, you begin at the bottom, and roll it upward and backward. This will be our plan in handling the subject. We begin at the end, and move towards the beginning, of our text.

This petition is about—

I. Debts.

II. Our Debts.

III. The Forgiving of our Debts.

I. DEBTS.

The Bible has many words for sin, but debt is the only word for it in the Lord's Prayer. In explaining this petition, our Saviour calls sins "trespasses," but in the Prayer itself we have only "debts." A debt is what is due, but what has not been done or paid. "Debts," "dues," and "duty" come from the same root. Sins are like debts in many ways, though not

in everything ; for the debts of the soul are more awful than any money debts can be. Sins represent duties that have not been met, and they make us guilty or liable to punishment.

Debt is one of the most mournful words in any language. The thing itself must be very bad, for Christ chooses it as the image of sin, the worst thing in the world. And how mysterious debt is ! You can't see it, and yet it darkens the debtor's life, and often makes him a miserable slave. " Our Lord," said the good Earl of Shaftesbury, when struggling to clear off all his debts, " endured all the sorrows of humanity but that of debt." Debt haunts the debtor even in his dreams. It is a thing of the past ; you can't touch it with your finger and say " there it is," and yet it is a tremendous reality. And such is the guilt of sin : it is a thing of mystery and fear.

The Persians were forbidden by law to contract debts, because debtors were led to say much that was untrue. The debtor may run away from his creditor, or get off by paying so many shillings in the pound. Debtors sometimes deny their debts, and contrive to burn or destroy all the proofs of them. But the soul's debts cannot be handled in any of these ways. The angel that records them in God's

Book of Remembrance, makes no mistakes or false entries. One of the most solemn things in the world is, that our sins are also recorded in the memory and conscience. They may be overlaid for a lifetime, and then start up with terrible distinctness. I have known men who were drowning, or thought that they were dying. I remember even the strangely low and solemn tones in which they told me how forgotten sins reappeared to them. They not only remembered these sins, but they saw them in a brighter light than ever was on sea or land. The power of memory and conscience seemed to be multiplied one thousandfold ; and it turned all their past to pain. 'Twas as if spiritual Rontgen rays had pierced through the oblivion around their dead past, and made it live again before their affrighted souls. They heard the very voices of those whom they had wronged ; the smallest deeds of meanness confronted them, and they suffered the keenest anguish. I once received a letter than which no sermon could have been more solemn. It was from a stranger in America who was about eighty years of age. He wished to find out the heirs of a man whose partner in business he had been in Bristol more than fifty years before the letter was written. His partner had died, and he had cheated the heirs. So

he said. He felt that he must soon die, and that he could not appear before the Judgment Throne till he had paid all these evil debts, principal and interest. He very earnestly implored us to find out the heirs without a day's delay, and so help him to die in peace. He had plenty of money, he said, but every pound of it was a burden on his soul. He had carried with him for half a century that mysterious debt-book which no man can get out of the way. It is said that "debtors have short memories." God's debtors have very long memories, though often they fall asleep for years. For our memories and consciences were never made to be hiding-places for our debts to God or man.

Many bicycles have what is called a cyclo-meter, which registers every turning of the wheel, and shows how many miles the cyclist has gone. I often pass the gate of a railway or library or gallery where a turnstile shows how many people enter. I cannot see the contrivance by which this is done, but I believe that it keeps a perfect record. In ways still more mysterious, and still more exact, are our deeds and debts recorded and photographed. In a recent trial a man denied that he had been in the company of some evil doers; but a detective was watching them, and he produced a photo of

the company, and the accused was among them.

"But I do no harm any way," you may often hear some one saying. The debts of the soul are divided into two classes; sins of omission and sins of commission; that is, sins which come from not doing what we ought to do, and sins which come from doing what we ought not to do. Now both of these kinds of sins are debts. A debt in money is the result of omission: it comes from not doing what we should do, from omitting or neglecting to pay what we are owing. Debt is doing nothing when we should do something. The last judgment turns largely upon sins of omission. "I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not." The rich man in the Parable had only sins of omission. "To do no harm anyway," might be said of a sheep or even of a stone. God has lavished countless mercies upon us: are we making a worthy return to Him? To hold back what we ought to give, is to plunge into debt. They fall into debt who do not pay their lawful rent. Our rent due to God is our soul and our life. He has given ourselves to us, that we might give our-

selves to Him. "Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God." "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." The "coming short" makes the debt. Though we may not have openly broken any known law, do we not every day come short of our duty? Do we render to all their dues?

We should remember that our sins are debts *to God*. When we sin we sin against ourselves: we injure our souls and spoil our happiness. We also sin against our relatives, friends, and neighbours, and indeed against all mankind. But every sin is chiefly against God. David had sinned terribly against others, yet he says, "Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned." His sense of sin against God swallowed up his sense of sin against others. Our debts have to do with God, and that is the most serious thing about our sins.

Christ calls sins

II. OUR DEBTS.

Let me make it singular and personal, and say *thy* debt. Thy sins are thy very own. The word *thy* has many meanings, or, at least, many shades and degrees of meaning. Have you ever tried to find out what is that strange tie which can bind a thing to you, so that you can call

it yours. Can you put it into words? I do not find it easy to make this plain. All you can say about it is, that it is yours, and that it does not belong to anybody else. But if you are asked the reason why, you will find it hard to give a satisfying answer. Have you ever thought in how many different senses your things are yours? Scotland is yours, yet four millions of people can claim it as theirs. Victoria is your Queen, and also the Queen of hundreds of millions. Your father and mother are yours, yet they belong as much to your brothers and sisters as to you: you can claim them all for yourselves though others share them with you.

But your debts are yours *exclusively*—without any subtraction, division or partnership. They are yours as your eyes, your bones, and your soul are yours: they are yours alone; they cannot be ascribed to you and to some other person. It is in vain to blame others for them, as Adam blamed Eve, and Eve the Serpent. Our temptations are not our sins, and our tempters cannot sin for us. Each is a solitary agent, and must bear his own burden of blame. And your debts are yours inseparably. Many tickets have these words, “not transferable”; you are not allowed to hand them to some one else. Some people think that they may

transfer their sins to pious relatives, to monks or nuns who pray and fast much, to priests, or to the Church. That cannot be ; for there is only One who can say, "Put that on Mine account."

For thy sins are thine *completely* and *intensely*. Your pennies in the savings bank are yours, but you can take them out, and give them away, or buy toys and sweetmeats with them. After that they are yours no longer. Your money is current coin : it can soon *run* away from you, so frail is the bond by which you hold it. Your clothes are yours in a way in which your pennies are not ; for they have been made for you, and for you only. But after a while your mother gives them to poor children, and then they are theirs and not yours. Your bones are yours by closer ties than bind to you your pennies, your books, or your clothes ; but your bones may be taken away from you by the surgeon, and you may be very glad to get rid of them. I have seen a man who had lost both his arms and his legs, and yet he remained a man in God's eyes and in his own. His limbs were his, but not a bit of himself. Your body is yours, but not as your soul is yours ; for your body may be taken from you by death, but your soul never can. Now we come to the heart of this matter : your

debts are yours more than your body is, but less than your soul is yours. Death severs for ever the bonds between you and your body of flesh, but it may not sever the bonds between you and your sins. "Nothing is so much our own as our sins," says Augustine. David says, "I acknowledged *my* sin unto thee, and *mine* iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess *my* transgression unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of *my* sin" (Ps. xxxii. 5). This fourfold repetition of the possessive pronoun means, my sin is *mine*, MINE, MINE! Unforgiven sin goes with the sinner into eternity: in his case death is God's arrest. Your sins, however, are less yours than your soul is yours. You did not create your soul, but you created your sins: but for you these sins would never have been. Every one who has a soul is in some sense a creator; for he creates things that were not, and out of nothing. To will, to act, is to create. But thank God that, while your sins are yours in this strange way, they are not your soul, they are not your very self. You have heard of One who can untie the knot. A Fiji convert offered up this beautiful prayer: "Great Spirit, untie the load of our sins. If this load were bound round our shoulders, we could untie it for ourselves; as it is bound round our hearts,

we cannot untie it, but Thou canst. Lord, untie the burden now." Sin is not in the soul as the germs of fever are in the clothes of the fever-stricken patient. People burn the clothes to get rid of the germs. You have read about the fabled poisoned shirt of Nessus, which was worn by the hero Hercules. Once warmed by his body, it grew into his flesh. He tried to tear it off, but he only tore himself, and soon he died in agony. Christ came into the world to show us how sin and the soul might be separated.

The Lord's Prayer teaches us that sin is awful: the vilest, hatefullest, most accursed thing out of Hell. Of the seven petitions of the Lord's Prayer, the last three have to do with sin. Christ wishes to frighten us about it and from it. His death on the Cross should give us some idea of its untold miseries. All the best people in the world have confessed their sins. Isaiah said that "all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags." Paul called himself the chief of sinners. Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland, thus begins his confession: "I, Patrick, a sinner, the rudest and least of all the faithful, and most contemptible to very many."

When the Bible speaks so strongly about sin, the object is to guide, and not merely to frighten us. I have read that the chaplain of

a regiment once heard the soldiers in the canteen singing a funny song about "The Bogie Man." He intimated that on the next Sabbath he would take "The Bogie Man" for his text. He then showed that the real "Bogie Man" was an evil conscience, with its sense of debt and guilt, and that it haunted every sinner, soured the sweets of life, and filled him with the fear of coming judgment. One of the soldiers told him that that sermon was the turning-point in his life.

I greatly desire to make one point very plain to you—Christ's religion is not a sour and gloomy thing, though it has to do with many sad and gloomy things. It must have these, as it is a religion for sinners. But Christ did not make sin; He only makes it known to us. He is the great Physician who finds us under a deadly disease, and brings only healing, health, and joy. The sorrows He causes us are all changed into joys. You have seen the doctor cutting the arm of your baby brother, and putting poison into the wound. Blood came, and the baby was restless and pained for days. But that new sorrow caused by the doctor protected the child from one of the most painful and loathsome of diseases. These sorrows brought with them the secret of health and strength. Only an ignorant child or a madman blames the doctor

for the sicknesses which he comes to cure. What Christ brings us is joy. He tells us of our debts ; but He teaches us to pray, " Our Father . . . *forgive* us our debts." The debts are ours to their last farthing : the forgiveness of them we owe to the Grace of God, revealed through our Lord Jesus Christ. All that grace is ours if we will but stretch out the hands of the heart and take it. If we have it not, the blame must be all our own ; for it is freely offered to the greatest sinners. Make sure that you do not neglect or miss it. Why should you be content to live in debt, when the dark burden may be taken from your soul ? You cannot have this boon too soon. Receive it now, and your life will be glad and free.

Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. Hide Thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me ; for Christ's sake. Amen.

No. VIII

AND FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS

(Continued)

THE STORY OF A SOUL

OUR FOREWORD

AS the best way to gain fresh knowledge is to try to understand thoroughly the words we use, I may here tell you that this word forgive is elsewhere translated "to remit." The word is very often used by Christ and His disciples. It is usually applied to debt or tribute. It means to loose, to set free, to let go, to clear, to cancel, to wipe out. At the Lord's Supper our Saviour spoke of "the remission of sins." Often a poor widow asks me to fill up for her and sign a printed paper with the heading, "Remission of Taxes." When I have done so, she plies the taxgatherer with two pleas — her poverty and the name of another—and thus she gains the remission or forgiveness of her debts. Is not this a parable, an earthly story with a heavenly meaning? I need not spend time in showing you what its meaning is.

I have read that forgive is a shortened form of forth give, that is, to give or send forth or furth or far away, just as forbid means to bid forth or away. I used to believe that, but I do not believe it now. I think that "forgive" comes from the same root as the German *vergeben*, which means to give thoroughly or greatly. GOD, the Forgiver, is the greatest giver—He gives the best of all gifts.

I have spoken to you about "our debts." I am now to tell you how they may be forgiven. The word *and* with which this petition begins, links together the prayer for bread and the prayer for pardon. It shows that every eater of bread will need pardon every day. Christ's is a religion for sinners, and for nobody else. This is the reason why, so far as we know, Christ never prayed with His disciples. They could pray only as sinners, while He could pray only as the sinless One. But while we all need pardon we don't all feel our need of it in the same way. The heavenly city lies foursquare upon the eternal hills, and it has twelve gates by which men may enter. Christians are not moulded like dishes in a Pottery, all with the same size, shape, and varnish. Many are drawn to Christ by His beauty and the desire to have a pure life; others are driven to Him by

grief; others by the thought of death; and many by sorrow for their sins.

I wish now to tell you the story of the forgiven soul in a few short chapters. I shall keep before me an average disciple of Christ.

I. HE THINKS.

He thinks about God, and Christ, and his own soul. He thinks earnestly about this life and the life to come. For even young children think far more about these great things than most people give them credit for. And most children are religious to begin with, though often the thoughtless ways of others blight their early religion, and they become as careless as their comrades. Thinking for himself is the first step in the religious history of the young pilgrim. He has fears, and feels that something is wrong with him. He knows that he has acts of his own. "I have a soul of my own," he might truly say to himself. "My doings are my own, my very own. And they are not what they should be. My conscience checks me for them, and makes me unhappy; though I have been kept from open sins, I have not loved God and man as I should. My life has been selfish, mean and shabby." Yes: even before he is very old, one has often a very keen sense of sin, and wishes that he could be good. I

have read of a naughty girl, who, after a severe punishment, prayed, "O God, make me good; not *real good*, only just so good that I shall never need to be whipped again." But many a child prays to be made *real good*, good in the inmost heart, good in the sight of God. Such a child finds a world of meaning in the prayer, "Forgive us our debts." "Mother," a girl once said, "if I could say what I like to God, it would be, Love me when I am naughty." This is the very thing God has done; for "when we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

II. HE DESPAIRS.

This may not come to him at first, but it comes by and by. The seed of despair is in his heart early, and it is sure to bring forth its fruit. But there are many kinds of despair. There is a despair that kills all hope and freezes the heart. That Red Indian had it who, when he found his canoe in the Rapids, laid down his oars, lighted his pipe, folded his arms, and was swept over the Falls at Niagara. But there is a right sort of despair, which guides us into, and keeps us in, the right way. This is how it reasons: debts, my debts, what am I to do with them? Let me sum them up. They are more than the hairs of my

head : I cannot number them. It is plain that I cannot "finance" them. I have no moral assets, "no effects"; I can make no contribution, I cannot "pay by instalments." I trace my own picture in that man in the parable, who owed his Lord 10,000 talents, and "had nothing to pay." I am a bankrupt in soul : I cannot atone for my sins ; I cannot forgive myself—only the wronged One can do that. I cannot kill my sin ; I cannot live it down ; I cannot unsin it. A working man told me that he was in debt to his master, and that when his health broke down, he appealed to his master's mercy, and said, " Will you forgive me that debt." His master frankly forgave him. I am like that broken-down debtor : I can't pay my debt. I have no coin that can be accepted in payment. I am like that Indian chief who was astonished that his finest Wampum and beads would not be accepted by the merchants of New York. Nobody can pay my debt for me. The priest cannot ; the Virgin Mary cannot ; my minister cannot ; the saints, dead or living, cannot ; my pious father or mother cannot—they have enough to do with their own soul's debts. I despair of help from every other quarter, " for no man can forgive sin, save God only." Only He who made me, can mend or new-make me. Despair thus helps faith, and teaches me to say,

"Forgive me my debts." "There is forgiveness with Thee," O God; and with no one else.

III. HE CONFESSES.

It is a very bad sign in any debtor when he will not confess his debts. His sullen silence proves that he means to cheat you. And there is no hope for me till I frankly confess my evil debts to God. This is a great law of His kingdom: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins." I find no difficulty in understanding this. Here is my little brother: he has done naughty things and spoken naughty words. He is sent in disgrace from the table to the corner. He stands and sobs, or he is too proud to let himself weep or sob. His mother is most eager to forgive him. But she cannot; she dare not. He must first own his fault, and ask forgiveness. Were she to offer him forgiveness while that sullen mood lasts, he would not take it; he would despise her in his heart for having offered it; he would fling it back in her face. The right must be maintained. But the little fellow's fury cools down; he thinks better about his behaviour; he comes to his mother and says, "I'm very sorry for what I have done, will you forgive me?" The only difficulty has now been taken out of the way, and in a moment he receives the kiss

of forgiveness. This, you remember, was the way with the prodigal son in the parable. He made up his mind about the words of his confession; he had conned his lesson well, you may be sure; but his little speech was cut short in the middle by the father's kiss. The father was a great forgiver. His desire to forgive had been surging for long like the rising tide, but the absence and silence of the son were like a strong sea-wall keeping it out. The moment an opening was made in the barrier, the forgiving love of the father rushed in, and shed itself abroad in the desolated heart of the forlorn sinner. The prodigality of the father's grace was greater than the prodigality of his son's sin. It seemed on that glad day as if the father cared for nothing but forgiving, and as if he could not forgive too much. If you fear that your sins cannot be forgiven, remember these divine words: "When he was yet a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion on him, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him."

In Holland there was a famous statesman called Barneveldt. He was unjustly condemned to die. On the scaffold he said, "Christ shall be my guide. O Lord, my heavenly Father, receive my spirit." His wife would not ask pardon for him, though she was encouraged to do so, for she knew him to be innocent.

Afterwards her son was condemned to die, and she asked pardon for him. Prince Maurice, her sovereign, said to her, "Why do you ask pardon for your son, when you would not ask it for your husband?" She nobly replied, "I would not ask pardon for my husband, because he was innocent; I solicit pardon for my son because he is guilty." I can ask forgiveness only when I know myself to be guilty. To be guilty is to have done a wrong to God which I cannot undo, so that I can only say "forgive." Remember that God not only permits but commands us to come to Him for pardon. If an earthly king allows a criminal to see him, he feels bound to forgive. King James II. of England allowed his nephew, the Duke of Monmouth, to see him, and yet did not grant him pardon. "To see him," the historian says, "and not to spare him was an outrage on humanity and decency." Another says, "it was a very extraordinary thing, and quite opposed to the usage of other nations." As God Himself invites you, you may surely come hopefully and boldly to the throne of grace.

You should come with a keen sense of guilt. Often you have it. In a hasty moment you have disobeyed and "spoken back to" your mother. When you come to think about it, your conduct seems very base and mean. You feel that you are one of the greatest

wretches on the earth, and you would do almost anything to wipe out that horrid deed. But all you can do is to ask forgiveness. When you sin against God, you sin against light, love, your own conscience, and your sick-bed vows. If it is so very mean to sin against your mother, what must it be to sin against God? If you feel your guilt so keenly in the one case, should you not feel it towards God also?

IV. HE RECEIVES FORGIVENESS.

I shall take my illustrations here from the life of Martin Luther. When a monk, his soul-debts became a crushing burden. He first tried with the help of the Church to pay his own debts. He had been taught as a Roman Catholic to believe thoroughly in the forgiving mercy of the Virgin Mary, while Christ was to him a stern and terrible judge. He fasted, and prayed, and scourged himself till he was on the brink of the grave. He thought that he might somehow pay off or lessen his debts by such self-made tortures. He expected to be justified by his works and his woes. He vainly fancied that his sighs would atone for his sins, that his tears would weep his transgressions away, and that his grief would pay for his guilt. But he discovered that even a bucketful of tears could not save him. He believed that if a monk could have

gained heaven by his works, he would certainly have done so. He went as far as Rome, and climbed up some marble stairs there on his bare knees, hoping that he would thus get an entry in his favour in the great debt-book of God. One day when he was crying, "Oh, my sin, my sin, my sin," an old monk whispered, "I believe in the forgiveness of sins." Luther clutched at the words. "Ah," said the monk, "we are not merely to believe that there is forgiveness for David and Peter : the command of God is, that we believe there is forgiveness for our own sins." Luther then said, "I believe in the forgiveness of sins, of my sins." Melanchthon, later on, showed him that repentance in the Bible meant a change of mind about sin, and that it could not mean doing penance, that is, inflicting ever so many miseries upon himself in order to pay his debts to God. Luther said that this explanation of repentance was to him "like the opening of the gate of Paradise." Great joy came to him as soon as he understood gospel-forgiveness. "Whenever I look at Peter," he said, "my very heart leaps up for joy. If I could paint a portrait of Peter, I would paint upon every hair of his head, 'I believe in the forgiveness of sins.'" He used to say that there were three things he dared not think of without Christ—sin, death, and judgment.

Two pictures of Luther are very common. The one shows us the monk seeking forgiveness in the wrong way, the other shows us him after he had found it. In the first picture he is poring over a big Bible chained to a reading desk in a cheerless prison-like vault. He is very thin, haggard, and frightened. In the other picture his face is peaceful and radiant, and his eyes are lifted up to heaven. Unconfessed and unforgiven sin crushes the soul, poisons all within, and makes true joy impossible. The sweet peace that fills the forgiven soul is the best thing you can have in this world. "What do you consider your greatest discovery?" was once asked of Sir J. Y. Simpson, the discoverer of the use of chloroform. He replied, "That I am a sinner, and that Christ is my Saviour."

V. HE USES THIS PRAYER EVERY DAY.

He prays for daily forgiveness as well as for daily bread. There are some folks who say that they have no sins. I do not understand them, nor does St John; for he writes (First Epistle, i. 8), "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." It is a sin to say that we have no sin. The most perfect Christian is he who feels most his own imperfections. A greater Spirit than his own teaches him to do this.

I have read that there is no perfectly pure water on the earth. It is pure while in heaven, in the clouds and far above us ; but when it comes near the earth, it catches some taint from the smoke and dust in the air, and when it touches the earth it is more or less soiled. Even pure well-water is not perfectly pure. It receives some impurity from the place in which it is stored in the bowels of the earth, and also from the channel by which it reaches us. So is it with the grace of God ; the heavenly treasure is in an earthen vessel ; and while the vessel may not sour, it slightly *tastes* what it holds. The penitent's tears need to be washed, his prayers need to be prayed over, and his repentance to be repented of. Rowland Hill used to say that he expected to enter heaven with the publican's prayer, " God be merciful to me a sinner."

There is of course a great difference between a rebel and a child. But if the child sins, both need to be forgiven. There is forgiveness in both cases, and therefore Christ teaches all to pray, " Forgive us our debts."

VI. HE ASKS FORGIVENESS " FOR CHRIST'S SAKE."

A true disciple of Christ knows that He could not teach everything at once. If he receives the Lord's Prayer from Him, he will

also receive all He teaches Himself and by His Apostles. The words, "for Christ's Sake," are not in the Lord's Prayer, and they are found only once in the Bible (Eph. iv. 25): "Even as God for Christ sake hath forgiven you." But the Revised Version has left out these words, and we find in their place, "Even as God in Christ also forgave you." The new translation is stronger than the old. When Arabi Pasha was fighting in Egypt, the English people there fled to Alexandria. A large Man-of-War—the *Temeraire*—went to help them, and anchored in the harbour. The English in Alexandria were safe "for the sake of the ship." Arabi knew that if he injured an Englishman, the ship's mighty gun would soon punish him severely. But when Arabi's soldiers got excited, the English were taken on board. They were safe then "in the ship," and not only "for the sake of the ship." As an officer told me this story on board the *Temeraire* by the side of her enormous gun, I felt that safety in the ship was better than safety on shore for the sake of the ship. Faith unites your soul to Christ, so that it resides in Christ: you are in Christ, and "God in Christ" forgives you. As the greater includes the less, you may wisely continue to close your prayers with, "for Christ's sake, Amen." An old hymn beauti-

fully expresses the writer's faith in these words—

“Upon a life I have not lived,
Upon a death I did not die,
Another's life, another's death,
I stake my whole eternity.”

A fellow-student had a favourite hymn, which was known in the family as “father's hymn.” It was—

“O Saviour, I have nought to plead,
In earth beneath or heaven above,
But just my own exceeding need,
And thy exceeding love.

“The need will soon be past and gone,
Exceeding great, but quickly o'er ;
The love unbought is all thine own,
And lasts for evermore.”

VII. CHRIST'S DISCIPLE HAS THE SECRET OF YOUTH.

When Columbus discovered America, a whisper ran round Spain that the New World had magic fountains, which gave unfading youth to all who drank of or bathed in them. The Red Indians had such fables among them, and the Spaniards were fain to believe them. A shipload of worn-out sinners, some of whose names the history books give, sailed for America. But their youth was not renewed, and few of them returned. There is, however, a water of life,

of which, if a man drink, he shall have all the youth that is possible for him on earth, and eternal youth in heaven. For it is sin that ages the soul. Unconfessed and unforgiven, this perilous stuff grows and gathers till it poisons all the fountains of joy within. But Christ's disciple has sin forgiven and put away. He also shuns the unforgiving spirit which has a strange power to blight and wither the soul. He also every day prays that he may not be led into temptation, and may be delivered from all evil. His soul thus preserves its youth, even when the body grows old.

Sin unforgiven is the mother of melancholy. Burton, a very learned man, has written a very big book on Melancholy. Would you like to know how he sums up all his wisdom as he closes? This is how: "Be not solitary, be not idle." He adds a quotation from a great Church Father: "Practise penitence when you are in good health." Better still surely to practise it when you have both youth and good health.

The "Pastor of Barnabas," one of the first books written by Christians after the New Testament, has these words: "They who repent are always young." God grant you youthful penitence and the perpetual youth it brings, for Christ's sake, Amen.

No. IX

AS WE FORGIVE OUR DEBTORS

TO many this is a very hard saying. I have read that in the early Church some left out this part of the Lord's Prayer; and I have heard a minister in the pulpit putting it thus: "as we *would* forgive our debtors." He wished to be perfectly honest, and so he was afraid to say that his people and himself had forgiven their debtors.

Revenge is as sweet as life to some. Among heathens, revenge—"blood revenge"—some of them call it—is held to be the first of duties and necessities. For, where the law is weak, revenge is the only way of getting justice and protecting life. Wars, crimes, and duels come from neglecting this petition. And revenge is often mighty among children. A boy showed me in his album the photo of his aunt with her face rubbed out. He maintained that it served her right as she had wronged him. In nurseries, schools, and playgrounds, boys and girls have often in revenge spoiled the clothes,

books, and toys of those whom they dislike. "I will never rest till I have warmed my hands in his heart's-blood," I once heard a schoolboy say of a class-fellow who had hurt his pride. The law often is, "hate the hater," "smite the smiter," "pay the wrongdoer back in his own coin, and be even with him." Some young folk think that all this is manly. "What," they ask, "are we to be milksops? are we to have no spirit?" Certainly: you cannot have too much spirit, only make sure that it is of the right sort. Let it be the spirit of the Christian, not of the pagan; the spirit, not of the dragon, but of the dove; the spirit of Him who has taught us to pray, "And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors."

As this duty is very hard and very apt to be forgotten, Christ singles it out, repeats it, and presses it home in the words which follow the Lord's Prayer, in the Parable of the Unmerciful Servant, and in many other solemn passages. Again and again He warns us that the unforgiving shall be the unforgiven.

May a greater Spirit than our own guide us as we study

- I. The Forgiving.
- II. The Forgiven.
- III. Their Blessedness.

I. THE FORGIVING.

But who are our debtors? The debts here are not of gold, but of guilt: they are sins. All sinners are God's debtors, but some of them are our debtors too. They sin against us by speaking evil of us, causing us needless pain, and doing us some wrong. These are the debtors we are to forgive.

In one way at least our forgiveness is like God's—we cannot fully forgive our debtors unless they frankly confess their fault and ask forgiveness. We are at once to forgive our debtor with the whole heart as soon as he says that he is sorry for his wrong-doing. But we must make sure that we count as our debtors only those who have done us some real harm. Ever so many folks imagine vain things about their neighbours. They are always fancying that others are slighting and injuring them. It is not easy to live in peace with such people. O pray that you may have an open and healthy mind. Never think evil of anybody till you are compelled to do it by facts as plain as day. Better a hundred times to be cheated and made a fool of now and then than to be suspecting your friends without cause.

There is no kind of begging which people dislike so much as begging pardon when in

the wrong. But in their wills and on their deathbeds, men, I notice, often ask forgiveness from those whom they have wronged. What a pity that they did not ask it when in good health ! As we would all wish to die, so let us try to live, in goodwill with all men. A nobleman shortly before his death forgave all his debtors, and wrote upon the erased accounts, "*Amore Dei remitto* : for the love of God I remit or forgive." If your spiritual debtors will not confess their error, then all you can do is to cherish towards them a forgiving spirit. They will not ask, and would not receive, your forgiveness if you offered it to them, but you can pity and pray for them : don't complain of them and needlessly mention their evil ways to others. That can do no good, and often it does great harm. For one thing, it does you great harm, for it gives you a keen sense of being wronged ; it may easily sour you, and poison all the sweets of life. I have just been reading that Tennyson's father did not inherit the family estate though he was the eldest son. He felt that he had been treated unjustly, though he was amply provided for in other ways. This feeling spoiled his own happiness and the happiness of his family. " My poor father," his son says, " was all his life a man of sorrow and acquainted with grief." There are tens of thousands like

him in the world. One of the grand secrets of a happy life is given you in this petition. Few people are more to be envied than those who can forgive and forget, and who forget even when they are not allowed to forgive, who are nobly silent about the wrongs they receive, and who drive away from their souls all the unpleasant things in social life. God make you, my reader, one of this blessed band. Make your own the motto I once saw on a sun-dial: "*horas nisi serenas non numero*." I take note of only the cloudless hours." Thus shall your soul keep itself in God's sunshine.

"If one knew all, one would pardon all," a wise man has said. Many bitter words are wrung from people who have wretched health, crushed hopes, wounded affections, and stinging remorse. They are angry with themselves and with others, rather than with those against whom they hurl their fierce words. Be patient with them, for you might act as they do if you had their sorrows.

But do not be discouraged if now and again you should find it very hard to forgive a debtor. For sometimes a friend cruelly betrays. You remember that the great Cæsar found Brutus, his bosom friend, as he thought, among the conspirators who were stabbing him to death in the Forum at Rome. Cæsar

at once lost heart, gave over defending himself as if life had lost all its charm, and said as he died, "Thou also, O Brutus." Some excellent Christians when wronged have been able to forgive only after weeks of struggling.

The Great Forgiver puts into His disciples a Spirit like His own. He creates in the forgiven heart a new fountain like that I have often watched by the sea shore. The salt water swept over it at full tide, but as soon as the ocean retired, the victorious, untainted spring gaily sent up its sweet blue water; and all the children gathered with kindred glee around the beautiful miracle, and quaffed the refreshing stream, and offered it to every passer-by. To be forgiven by God is to get more than merely a clean slate to make a fresh start with. He infuses His own spirit into every forgiven soul: He teaches us to forgive our debtors from the heart seven times a day, and seventy times seven. Our forgiveness must be full and Christ-like. In the parable of the unmerciful servant, He shows us what a monster that debtor is who has been forgiven ten thousand talents, and yet harshly refuses to forgive one hundred pence to his own debtor.

O God, teach us not to pray in anger lest thou shouldest answer us in Thy anger. Make us forgiving that we may be forgiven.

II. FORGIVEN.

The pivot of this petition is that little word *as*. For only they who forgive their debtors can have their own debts forgiven : the unforgiving is the unforgiven. Forgivingness and forgiveness are an inseparable pair. God hath linked together the forgiveness of the heart and of heaven. This is an unchanging law of the kingdom.

Now this does not mean that our forgiving others deserves, merits, or earns our own forgiveness by God. It cannot mean that—perish the idea ! For it is written as with a sunbeam on the sacred page that forgiveness is all of free grace. God is not a buyer and seller, with whom we may drive a sordid bargain for the skies. He is the great Giver and the great Forgiver ; His is a Kingdom of Grace as Great Britain is a kingdom of liberty ; slavery can't live in the one nor self-righteousness in the other. God's gifts are thus offered to the chief of sinners without money and without price.

Nor does this petition mean that our poor, narrow, grudging way of forgiving is to be the measure or style of God's forgiveness. That would bring God down to our own low level. But His forgiveness is to be the model of ours. "Therefore be ye kind one to another, tender-

hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Eph. iv. 32). Where should we be if God were to measure back to us with our own bushel?

No, no: the petition means that if we don't forgive, we cannot be forgiven; that an unforgiving spirit shuts out God's forgiving grace; that he who prays for mercy must shew the deeds of mercy. It is like for like: he who shews no mercy shall receive none.

The Revised Version makes this very plain: "And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors." When we can use these words, the great barrier to forgiveness in our hearts has been swept away.

There are many reasons why this should be so. A heart full of revenge and ill-will cannot believe in a forgiving God. "King Theodore, who never shewed mercy to others, distrusted the offers of mercy held out to him by us, and died by his own hand:" that was the telegram from Lord Napier when he relieved the missionaries in Abyssinia. Theodore naturally thought that Lord Napier was altogether such an one as himself. Hence, when our soldiers scaled the rock of Magdala, his dead body was found just inside the gate of the city.

Again, the unforgiving soul cannot receive forgiving mercy, for it is not adjusted or

rightly set towards God. I have often seen the millrace sluice of a mill driven by water. When the sluice is down, the gurgling water rushes against it, finds no entrance, darts aside like an arrow, and flows past never to return. A revengeful man has his heart-sluice down : he is not in what men call the receptive mood. Well : it is not quite correct to say that his heart is closed ; for it lets out a stream of angry words while it shuts out the sweet words of mercy. It is like a gigantic sluice which I saw across a stream at the sea-shore. It was so made that, when the tide was low, it let out the river-water into the sea ; but it would not let in the sea-water. Our receiving of the gospel depends on our frame of mind. The unforgiving spirit spoils all, but forgiveness is a most refined and generous grace, and it opens the flood gates of the soul to the inrushing tide of the great ocean of forgiving mercy.

It is plain that the more we forgive, the fuller will be our enjoyment of forgiveness. For when we forgive others the heart is warmed and enlarged, so that it can take in an ever-growing abundance of the grace of God. It clears and widens all the passages by which the gospel enters the man. But he who does not forgive others breaks the only bridge over which he can pass.

"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." What, then, shall the unmerciful obtain?

The aim of the Lord's Prayer is to make everyone a child of God and a follower of Christ. But God and Christ are great forgivers, and he who will not forgive, defeats, so far as he can, God's aim to found a kingdom of love on the earth. We constantly need forgiveness. How monstrous that any one claiming to be a child of God should be unwilling to forgive. Such colossal selfishness and inconsistency shock us. A man's debts to God are uncountable and unthinkable, and yet he will not forgive his neighbour a few pence! What an outrage on all reason, decency and humanity!

I wish here to repeat some of the laws of Christ's kingdom, which I have been trying to explain to you—the unforgiving soul is the soul unforgiven: first forgivingness then forgiveness: the more we forgive the more we understand forgiveness: he who knows not how to forgive, knows not how to be a Christian. He should not use this prayer; for he asks God to treat him as he treats his debtors: he prays for a curse upon himself, not a blessing. What will his case be if his prayer is answered?

III. THE BLESSEDNESS OF THE FORGIVING
AND THE FORGIVEN.

I have already given you some faint hints about the exquisite misery of the unforgiving spirit. God has thus branded it with His stern disapproval. The human heart was not made for revenge ; for, however sweet it may taste at first, it soon turns all within to gall and wormwood. Revenge is the spirit of hell ; it is hell begun in the heart. When you grow older you will find not a few people—I at least have found many—who, by brooding over real or fancied wrongs, have ruined their health, soured their nature, darkened the very heaven above them, lost the good of life, and spoiled the comfort of their homes. They sank into the habit of writing on the sand all the favours they received, while they graved all their imagined wrongs deep in granite. Those who should know best, tell us that this bitter-heartedness has brought many into our asylums, and you may come across some not yet in asylums, whom an unforgiving spirit and a merciless tongue have made more than half mad. Anger against those who harm us, injures us more than it can injure them. Very wise is the poet's advice—

“ Nor be thou rageful, like a handled bee,
And lose thy life by usage of thy sting.”

Or, as another poet puts it—

“Party-poets are like wasps, who dart
Death to themselves, and to their foes but smart.”

Why, I am often pained by reading the Lives of people who are always harping on the injuries men had done them. Fling such books from you: they put your soul out of tune, and it is sometimes not easy to set it again to the heavenly music of the Lord's Prayer. All delights attend through life those sweet-hearted, hateless Christians who put away from them “all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, . . . with all malice.” Heaven's sunshine is in them and around them, and all their friends like to warm themselves at their fire. But evil speakers vex you like the mosquitoes: their words sting you like thorns, nettles and briars when, during your holidays, you lose your way in the tangled wood. Sacred silence when provoked, is no mean part of the art of living well. Quarrelling takes from life many of its best charms. Most men regret their quarrels even when they believe that they were in the right. The old fable said that all the winds which caused shipwreck were let out of a bag in the cave of Aeolus. So most of the evils that wreck our peace are let loose by merciless tongues. Never quarrel

if you can help it: that is a safe rule. Those who hate quarrelling put round life's jolting wheel a pneumatic tyre which softens every yard of the road over which they travel.

And how beautiful and noble this spirit is! It is the likest God within the soul. Virtue goes out from the hem of such a man's garment. Think of Christ on the Cross, forgiving His murderers. A learned writer says, that among the inscriptions on the tombstones of the martyrs in the Catacombs, there has been discovered only one sigh, and only one picture of a persecution. The early martyrs gave to those who executed them clothes, gold, and other presents, as a token that they bore no ill will. In this way they won over the heathen world. John Bunyan had to lie in the jail at Bedford for twelve years, for no other crime than preaching the Gospel; and yet so big-hearted was he, so full of the spirit of this petition, that, so far as I remember, he has not written one bitter word against his persecutors. What a triumph of God's grace over the spirit of revenge! In the East Indies they have a beautiful proverb, "A good man is like the sandal wood tree. As it leaves a part of its fragrance on the axe, so he leaves his blessing with his enemy." Many well known heathen converts of our

day have told the world, that they were first allured to study our religion by its teaching men to love their enemies and bless their haters. The difference between it and the bitter, vengeful spirit of their own religion, startled them, and aroused their curiosity. Something within told them that such a religion must have come from heaven. What the world needs is an incarnation of Christ up to date, and that we cannot have in the absence of the forgiving spirit.

“As we forgive.” Every time we use these words, we bind ourselves to be forgiving. The petition is a vow to treat others as we wish God to treat us. As we renew this vow every time we recite the Lord’s Prayer, God help us to pay our vows, so that we may miss none of the good which comes from living at peace with God, and in good-will to all men. Amen.

No. X

LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION

THE mirage of the desert is the most beautiful cheat in the world. It is the masterpiece, the Arabs say, of the evil spirit who revels in the ruin of man. Making himself invisible, he calls the traveller by name, lures him from the path, and leads him on by a vision of shady trees and sparkling fountains. At last the charming scene fades into mist, and in the lonely wilderness the poor dupe dies of fatigue and thirst.

The fables of Christian lands hold the same ideas, blended with the hope of rescue.

My last holiday was in the Black Forest, in the south-west of Germany. On the way we climbed the "castled crag of Drachenfels"—that is, the Dragon Rock—on the Rhine. It has a big cave, which, as the legend tells, was the haunt of a terrible dragon. In the olden times this monster, folks said, devoured many Christians whom the Pagans gave to it

for a prey. One day it was about to destroy a Christian maiden. But she drew a cross from her breast, and held it up before the horrid beast. As if struck by a thunderbolt, the monster fell back, plunged into the Rhine, and was seen no more.

This maiden's name was Siegfried, or *Victory of Peace*. That beautiful name became her well; for she shows how Christ's grace and truth conquer the powers of evil.

Further up the river, we came to another rocky hill, called the Lurlei, where the Loreley used to sit and sing. She was a cunning, misleading enchantress, who, like the sirens of the old Greeks, lured the poor mariners to their ruin. But at last she was subdued by love, and then her evil-doing was at an end.

Strassburg also lay on our road. We went to the cathedral, to hear and see the clock strike twelve. That clock was called the eighth wonder of the world. At noon the Twelve Apostles come out, glide before the statue of Christ, and bow to Him. This act of homage is repeated thrice. When Peter appears, a big cock in the corner lifts its head, swells its neck, flaps its wings, and crows in the most life-like way. You might easily think that it was really alive. This threefold cock-growing always draws a crowd,

and draws from them a queer, half-mocking laugh. The cock crows over Peter, and the people laugh at him. One feels that it is not fair thus to keep up against Peter this one sin which Christ pardoned. One is disposed to knock the impudent bird from its perch and chase it out of the church.

That cock has crowed there for over six hundred years. It is perhaps the most popular preacher in the world; for it has a large and interested audience every day in the year. And it teaches us that even a true-hearted disciple of Christ may easily fall before temptation.

In the Black Forest we came upon a wild, weird tarn in a moor. It was the fabled home of the Nixie, a sweet-singing, cruel water-witch. Her charming voice and looks drew to her young huntsmen, who were slain by the fiend and serpent in her service.

In the same forest we passed through several romantic glens with a jutting rock on each side. The one rock was called the Angel's Pulpit, and the other the Devil's Pulpit. At the Baths of Baden-Baden we saw a beautiful picture of these rival preachers. A crowd of country folk were listening to the angel, while a horseman and his servant were lending their ears to the devil.

These old-world legends teach a truth which can never grow old. They remind us that in the desert and the field, by road and river, in town and country, on the mountain and in the glen, even among Christ's followers, and in every age, temptation is ever near the sons and daughters of men. The goblin of the desert, the horrid dragon, the enchanting Loreley and Nixie, and the Devil's Pulpit are never far from any one of us. Ah me, how strangely easy it is to turn into the wrong road to our undoing! Very strange that the poor soul should have so many foes! Every day we need to pray, "Lead us not into temptation."

This petition invites us to study

- I. Our Temptations.
- II. Our Prayer.
- III. Our Pledges.

I. OUR TEMPTATIONS.

To lead one into temptation, usually means to try to get him to do what is wrong. But because God is God, He can never do that. Temptations are of two kinds. God tempted Abraham; that is, He tried and tested him. From such temptations men gain strength. The aim of them is, not to do evil, but to do good. Christ was tempted of the devil in the wilderness. The tempter's aim was to do

evil. The word temptation now-a-days has usually a bad sense, but, of course, it cannot have that sense here. Trial sometimes passes into temptation, and temptation often becomes merely trial. Satan never tries, and God never tempts (in the evil sense) any man. God tries us as the refiner tries and purifies his gold.

Even in the path of duty, in the sanctuary, and in prayer, even in home-sheltered childhood, temptations come to us. Christ teaches all to say, "Lead *us* not into temptation."

Some places in Egypt are honey-combed with cells. Thousands of monks fled thither to escape from temptation. But each monk took with him the man—himself—and the evil world from which he wished to escape. The most frightful temptations came to them in their caves. One of them, St Antony, found that he had a constant companion, who was the great tempter himself. Evil thoughts swarmed into the monk's mind like the plagues of Egypt. Even Eden had its serpent, its forbidden tree, its alluring apple, its story of sin, and its sin-begotten sorrows. Darker mystery still: temptation entered heaven itself, and triumphed there, for many of the angels fell before it. The greatest danger may be near us when no danger appears. Not to be tempted may become a

great temptation, for it may lead us to give up watching and prayer.

Even the children of God, who have been forgiven, are taught to pray, "Lead us not into temptation." There is fear of a saint so long as he is out of heaven. One day Dr Chalmers and a friend passed a drunk man lying in the gutter. Dr Chalmers said solemnly, "But for the grace of God, Sir, that would have been myself." Pardon is not enough; we daily need grace to keep us from evil. Even when sin has been forgiven, this one great fear is left. The Christian prays against temptation because he fears sin.

But, thank God, temptation is not sin: there is a very plain boundary line between them. The hymn puts it well—

"Yield not to temptation,
For *yielding* is sin."

My temptation becomes my sin only when I yield to it: my tempter cannot sin for me, or compel me to sin against my will. Eve sinned only when she consented. Christ was sorely tempted, but He had no sin; for His will was not won over. "My son, if sinners entice thee, *consent* thou not." That is it. Your temptation is your trial but not your transgression. If, like Christ, you say No, the temptation will add to your strength. The

savage believes that the soul of every foe he slays enters into him and increases his power. So is it with every temptation you vanquish.

II. OUR PRAYER.

I may explain it in this way, "My Father, lead me not into any trial that might be too strong for me. I am very weak, and I may easily yield to evil. Pity my weakness, and so order my life that I may be kept from every wicked thing. O bring me not into any situation where sin is easy and holiness difficult."

This prayer should be very earnest. Christ often tells us to "watch and pray." We must watch well; for temptation often wears a very pleasing disguise. It is like the *Judas tree*. The flaming beauty of its crimson blossoms attracts the bees. But every bee that alights upon it is poisoned, and the earth beneath is strewn with its victims. Often temptation is like the asp that killed Cleopatra, hidden in a basketful of flowers. And temptation often comes very suddenly and overpowers us before we have time to bring our forces against it. The old divines speak of sins of infirmity and invasion, sins of surprise, unpremeditated sins and sudden sallies, outbursts, and ambushes of temptation.

I wish to warn you against three sins.

The first is *telling lies*. Books have been

written on "Children's Lies." Some even hint that the love of lying is born with very many children, and that nearly all children tell lies almost from the cradle. There can be no doubt that this is a sore temptation with many children. At first they see no harm in "fibbing," in "white lies," or in half-lies. They like to make-believe, to romance, to tell big stories, and to "show off" before their playmates. They have a strong fancy, a love for the wonderful, and desire to please; they exaggerate and "draw the long bow." There are "acted lies," as when a child has hid something, and when asked about it, holds up empty hands. It is hard for some children to see the necessity for always sticking to the exact truth. Pray that you may be a truth-lover, and a hater of every kind of deceit. He is a good scholar who learns the best lore—to hate lies. "A truthful man usually has all the virtues." Lying, if not the father, is at least the full cousin, of all the vices. If a ship when abuilding gets a twist in the keel every part of it is twisted. Love of truth is the keel of your character.

Cheating at exams is a great temptation to some scholars. Teachers say that this mean sin is very common in schools, and that many scholars seem to have no conscience about it. What miseries it brings to some in after-life!

From many affecting cases known to me I select two. A widely known minister gained a gold medal at the University by cheating. This sin haunted and tortured him for years. I am sure he often wished that he had been the dunce instead of the dux of his year. At last, in the hope of getting peace, he confessed it all to his congregation from the pulpit.

The Rector of an Academy showed me a letter from one of his duxes. The writer had gained the prize by cheating. He sent back the medal to his teacher, and asked him to do what he thought best. He was quite willing that his sin should be advertised in all the newspapers. He had already suffered so much, he touchingly said, that it was not possible to add to the pangs of his shame and remorse.

When city-bred boys get into their teens, they sometimes go at night into the centre of the city "*to see life*," or "*for a lark*," as they put it. They yield to an idle curiosity, and love the fun of city-exploration. I saw some very beautiful antelopes in Canada. They are full of idle curiosity, and die of it. The Indians put a red rag on the top of a pole, and hide in the prairie grass. The deer come to gaze stupidly at this new object, and are shot. Young souls in our city are slain or wounded in the same way. A man I knew used to roam about the streets at night as he did

when a boy. His curiosity, innocent at first, soon grew vicious. "I could not live," he said, "without a sight now and again of the glittering lamps." Like the moth, he was caught by glare; and, like the moth, the wings of his soul were singed and broken, and at last he fell to rise no more. As he thought, he liked only the glad swarming sound of city life; it warmed his heart to mix with his fellows; but, the slave of low desires, he was under the power of evil far more than he knew. My heart trembles when I see a small band of boys gaily roving the streets at night. You should not need to forage abroad for entertainment. Cultivate home-bred joys and healthy evening occupations, and you will be kept from temptations that bring death to many. The ancients said that the Muses could not be tempted because they were so busy with the work they loved. The tempter succeeds among idlers. Foolish curiosity ruined the first Eden, and it still ruins the Eden of many an innocent youth. Why should you wish to know anything about the base, vulgar ways of evil men and women?

III. OUR PLEDGES.

You know about the Christian Endeavour pledge. By it the endeavourer binds himself in the strongest way. Every prayer carries

pledges in its bosom. If I honestly pray this prayer, I pledge myself to two things: first, that I will not lead myself into temptation; and, secondly, that I will not lead others.

There is no sense in using this prayer if, with my eyes open, I go into any temptation which I can shun. If I dread the precipice, let me shun the slope; if I shudder at the whirlpool, let me keep far from the gentle current at its rim; if I hate sin, let me oppose its small beginnings; if I wish not to be a trespasser, I should keep off the doubtful border line. He who, of his own free choice, goes into bad company, tempts the tempter to tempt him. When the plague was raging in Bombay, a friend wrote that only one European had died of it. He had gone into the plague-stricken homes to photograph the patients. Never go where the plague is unless you go on God's errands.

One day I saw a carter who could not get his horse to back. Once when backing it, horse and cart had fallen into a ditch, and after that no force could make the horse back. Would that every carter were as wise as his horse: no carter would then be drunk a second time. Howell Harris, one of the greatest of Welsh preachers, was converted by his pet goat. He and his boon-companions made it drunk, and drew amusement

from its caperings. But after it had sobered, they could not get it to taste a drop of whisky. The owner felt deeply rebuked by his goat; it seemed a more respectable being than himself. He gave up his drinking, and became a great Christian and a great preacher.

This petition also pledges us never to lead another into temptation. He who does so, literally plays the devil to himself and others. How awful such conduct is! Christ was love incarnate, and yet some of the most fearful words ever spoken were hurled by Him against men who tempt others: "Whoso shall offend (that is, tempt to do what is wrong) one of these little ones which believe in Me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea." One can understand the truth and love in these terrifying words, when one considers what life-long and unspeakable injury is often done to the young by their tempters. What an awful thing it must be for a man to be charged at God's Judgment-bar with having poisoned and ruined any young life. God grant that you may never commit this sin and crime.

The petition runs: "Lead us not." We are to fight our temptations not in a solitary, but in a social way. William Arnot tells that,

when going to school, he had to cross the ford on the river Earn. When the current was strong, the children used to take each other's hands, and so they passed safely through. They who are sorely tempted must find good companions or make them. The Lord's Prayer takes for granted that there will be a real comradeship among the disciples of Christ.

Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God, our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

No. XI

DELIVER US FROM EVIL

Deliver us from the Evil *One* (margin, from evil)

—*Revised Version.*

THE little ermine may be justly called the saint among beasts. Its home is in the Far North, and its hair is as white as the driven snow. When hunters wish to catch it, they spread filth around its hiding-place. Such is its passion for perfect purity, that it will rather die than stain its spotless coat. Long ago its fur was worn by kings as a symbol of purity. Our judges and magistrates still have their robes ornamented or bordered with it, or what passes for it. The word "Ermine" is thus used figuratively for the office of a judge.

A perfect saint would have an ermine-like purity of vesture. "Hating even the garment spotted by the flesh," every true Christian prays, "Deliver us from evil." Having asked for daily bread, forgiveness, and freedom from temptation, his last and deepest yearning is to be delivered from every taint

of that evil which his heavenly Father hates. "I fear nothing but sin," was Chrysostom's reply to the threats of the Emperor.

May God guide us as we study—

I. Evil.

II. Its Slave.

III. Its Conqueror.

I. EVIL.

In the Revised Version the word *one* is in italics: it has been added by the translators of the Bible. "Deliver us from the evil" is the whole petition as it is given in the gospels. The evil here may be the evil one, or the evil thing; for the word may be neuter or masculine. The same two words in other texts mean the devil. Here they probably mean all evil, both evil things and the evil one. If there be no satan, then man must be satanic. But there is a power outside of us, not ourselves, which makes for wickedness.

It does not say from evils. We have countless evils, and one evil which towers above all the rest. Disease and death are the evils of the body; error and ignorance are the evils of the reason; sorrow is the evil of the heart; the evils of daily life are legion; but sin is the evil of the whole man, the evil of evils. We may rightly pray to be

delivered from evils ; but we must add an "if" to such prayers, as Christ did in Gethsemane. For some of these evils are sent for our good.

Ill that He blesses is our good,
And unblest good is ill.

Often our griefs become our gains. But when we pray against sin, we leave out every "if," and say outright, "deliver us from the evil."

"The evil" is, of course, sin ; that which ought not to be. It is worse than the Devil, for the Creator is greater than the creature. "What made the devil a devil?" was once asked in an assembly of divines. "Nothing but sin," one of them replied. "Evil be thou my good," is Satan's prayer according to Milton. Sin is the root of our evils ; it brought into our world death and all its woes. You have seen in the country what is called a *well'ee*—a spring or cluster of springs on the hillside. The grass around is very green, and it quivers and sinks under you. The water bubbles up there from hidden fountains amongst the rocks, and a tiny stream is formed which joins the burn, and then the river, and at last the ocean. Sin is the *well'ee* of all the evils that afflict our race. All these evils are short-lived ; but sin, if unforgiven, goes with the

soul into the other world. It is the curse of curses, the calamity of calamities, a thing to be for ever hated and shunned. There is more evil in a drop of sin than in a sea of affliction.

Some have puzzled themselves to find out how sin got into this world. Friday asked Robinson Crusoe why God did not kill the devil. That is too hard a problem for us. The head soon grows dizzy by gazing upon this dark whirlpool. We know that sin has got into the world, and the great question with us should be how we can get it out of ourselves and others. It is enough for us to know that there is a way of escaping from it.

This is a prayer for deliverance from all evil. Not one sin, however sweet it may taste at the time, can do us any good. The root of the word here used for evil means hardness, labour, grief, annoyance. Evil then is what is mischief-making and sorrow-creating, such "hard labour" as prisoners are condemned to. Devil means one who brings trouble and sorrow upon others. Christ's word here tells us that "the way of transgressors is hard." Learned men say that the word for sin in the Sanscrit language is the same as the word for a serpent, and that it means a *throttler*, that which seizes a man as a boa-constrictor when it crushes his victim to death.

The older you grow, the greater will be your fear of evil. You can know little about it now, but by and by you will be saddened by discovering how much evil is in the world and in the hearts of men.

II. THE SLAVE OF EVIL.

I was deeply touched when I read that some of the Red Indians in former days had on the one side of their tent a picture of the Good Spirit, and on the other a picture of the Evil Spirit. The Indian felt that both these spirits were near, that they were both wooing him, and that he must give himself to the one or the other. St Paul often tells us the very same thing.

There are many weird stories from the Middle Ages about men who have made themselves the bond slaves of sin. You have heard of Dr Faustus. As the story goes, he made a deliberate bargain with the Evil One. The Devil was to give him all the pleasures of sin for so many years, and on a certain day he was to have as payment the poor man's body and soul. This bargain was written out in a lawyer-like style, and was duly signed and sealed by the contracting parties. Men are doing that very thing still. A new religion called Satanism has been founded in Paris. By a "black sacrament" men and

women bind themselves over to the service of Satan.

I wish you to think how awful this slavery is. I will give you two texts about it, and illustrate them. " Evil shall hunt the violent man to overthrow him " (Ps. cxl. 11). When I visited the Lapps I felt greatly interested in them, and read all I could about them. When a bear kills one of their reindeer, a Lapp hunter enters his low-roofed hut, the floor of which is covered with small twigs which are as soft and *springy* as our best cushions. He gets his long pole, and his snow shoes which are eight or ten feet long, and two or three big knives or daggers. He takes down from the roof a fat, smoked reindeer ham as food for himself and his two brisk little Eskimo dogs. A stranger to fear, he starts at once. The retreating bear leaves his tracks on the snow, and, should fresh snow cover them, the scent of his good dogs never fails. He and his dogs sleep side by side on the snow, and start again with the dawn. Sometimes it is three or four days before they find the robber. He runs for his life, but the hunter with his swift shoes soon wearies him out. At last there is a tough fight, and the violent beast is overthrown. The Lapp flays the bear, and quietly tramps homeward over the crunching snow with the skin on his shoulder. I read that

no bear ever lives to kill a deer the second time.

Unless he repents and forsakes his sins, evil shall hunt the violent man in that way. We speak of a haunted man : that just means a hunted man. Many books describe the mysterious agonies of the man who is haunted by an evil conscience. By day and night his evil deeds are ever before him ; all the sweets of life are soured ; and his blessings are turned into curses. Byron's Childe Harold says—

“What exile from himself can flee ?

To zones, though more and more remote,

Still, still pursues where'er I be,

The blight of life—the demon thought.”

We cannot be too much afraid of the evil which hunts and haunts the violent man as the avenging Lapp and his dogs hunt down the violent beast that robbed the flock. No blood-hound is so sure and staunch as remorse.

My other text is, “Evil shall slay the wicked” (Ps. xxxiv. 21). We often think that punishment comes from without like a bursting bomb or a fired torpedo. We may fancy that God might easily let the evil-doer off. But at least a large part of punishment, if not the whole, comes from ourselves and from our sins. God has so made us that sin ever works woe and death. This strange law is self-acting. It works silently, surely, irre-

sistibly, just like the law of gravitation, or the law by which we grow older every day. A sinner is his own judge and avenger; his sorrow leaps from the bosom of his sin; his woe is a harvest from the black seed of his own sowing.

We cannot lay this great truth too much to heart. Even if there were no world beyond the grave, still these two laws would hold good: "Evil shall slay the wicked," and "Evil shall hunt the violent man to overthrow him."

Sir Noel Paton in his picture, "The Pursuit of Pleasure," has a crowd of revellers, and above them the angel of retribution, an awful being with a huge drawn sword. But this haunting, slaying angel is within, as well as without, the reveller; more than that, he is the reveller himself. For "the wages of sin is death." Wages means here the soldier's rations, the daily bread he eats, the very food that enters into his brain, and marrow, and blood. That food nourishes disease and death.

Yon poor drunkard is both the willing and unwilling slave of his evil passion. The first thing he does in the morning after he has dressed himself, is to go down on his knees and pray to God to keep him from the drink for that day. But evil habits have bred in him a something mightier than his will and all his resolves. For, ten minutes afterwards,

he goes to his press, and, with tears in his eyes, tears of pity for his poor self and his wife and children, he drinks and drinks till he knows not what he is doing. He repeats this every day till he slays himself. Yet once he was one of the brightest, happiest, and most promising of boys. There are one thousand strong reasons why you should shun intemperance, which is one of the most awful evils of our day. I have just been reading that the heir of one of the most famous of Scotsmen came under the power of strong drink. His broken-hearted father said that he was possessed, like those we read of in the gospels.

III. THE CONQUEROR OF EVIL.

There are some words you may reasonably say to yourself when you study this petition. *Ah, then, there is hope for me.* Yes; there is. For Christ does not teach you useless or misleading prayers. He means that you should be delivered from all evil. Sin is not to have dominion over His disciples: don't doubt this for a moment. He Himself backs the prayer which He teaches you to use: "I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil." Evil is not thyself; thy sin is not thy soul; Christ has made a wonderful provision to deliver thee from thy sins. I

knew a very wild man who felt himself in the grasp of evil, and was afraid that it would master him. For a while he was in despair. But he began to study the Bible. One day he said to me, "I think there may be a chance for me yet. Big, black sinners like myself have been saved, and why should not I?" The last petition of the Lord's Prayer shows that there is a chance yet for the worst sinners out of hell.

But this evil is a very serious thing. Oh, yes, else Christ would not have warned you so earnestly against it, nor would He have died for our sins on the cross. Sin is before and behind you, without and within you. And if you only let it alone and let it have its will, it will make you its helpless slave. It is like a deadly disease, which, unchecked, soon runs its course. A great general is reported to have said to his soldiers as they entered into battle, "Well, lads, there are your enemies, if you don't kill them they'll kill you." The evil is your grand enemy; and you must slay, or be slain by it. This is a duel in which one must die.

I can't deliver myself. No; for deliverance comes from without: deliverance is needed only when one is over-powered. Victor Hugo describes a man who was caught in the quicksands on the coast of

Normandy. His feet became like lumps of lead, and he struggled with all his might. But his struggles only made him sink deeper. At last he saw, as he thought, for the last time, the roofs of his native village. But strong deliverers came and threw a rope to him, and pulled him out of his living grave. Like him, you must despair of delivering yourself and seek the help of Another. "Who shall deliver me?" Paul asks, and his answer is, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. vii. 24 and 25).

And every Christian is to pray this prayer. Yes; even the forgiven must do so. For evil is dangerous even when it has received its death-blow. You remember the famous picture of Livingstone under the lion. The lion had received a ball and was within two or three minutes of its death, yet it wounded and almost killed Livingstone. He who is delivered from the evil is like Paul, who says, "I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion" (1 Tim. iv. 17).

Our deliverance, never complete on earth, is perfected in heaven; for there only is there no evil from which we need to be delivered. This petition must thus go with us to the last hour of life, to the very gate of heaven.

Delivered—what a word! A poor dazed prisoner was set free from the Bastille during

the French Revolution. The people in the street gave him a few sous. Full of pity for other prisoners, he halted before a caged bird, bought it with his sous, opened the cage, and set the captive free. The panting bird soared and sang, and fell down dead at the feet of its deliverer. The little heart had burst from excess of joy at its deliverance.

What "a jubilant shout" that was which arose from the famished men, women, and children in Lucknow as Havelock and his "glorious Highlanders" rushed to their rescue. They understood the rapture in that word "delivered."

In a large company I once heard this question asked, "What are the most eloquent words you ever heard?" The question went round till it came to a far-travelled man. He said, "The most eloquent words I ever heard were on board a ship on the high seas. We came within sight of two men on a raft. A boat was lowered, and soon two shipwrecked sailors were brought on board. One of them at once knelt down on the deck and, in presence of the whole company, poured out his heart in gratitude to God. Eloquence like that I had never heard before, nor have I since. I never knew till then what eloquence was. Every one on board was in tears." And there were tears in his voice

as he spoke to us." Delivered from the raging sea of evil, and safe on the land which sin can never defile, the saints of God will say as they never could on earth, "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory."

St Paul probably had this petition in his mind when he said, shortly before his death, "The Lord will deliver me from every evil work, and will save me unto His heavenly kingdom, to whom be the glory unto the ages of the ages. Amen."

No. XII

FOR THINE IS THE KINGDOM, AND THE POWER, AND THE GLORY, FOR EVER

OUR HALLELUJAH

THESE words are not found in the Revised Version. The learned say that they are not in the oldest manuscripts. One would be sorry to part with them; for the truth they teach is found often in the Bible, and they make a very natural and beautiful close. Without them one would feel that the Lord's Prayer had been cut off as with a knife; one would get a shock as when the brake is quickly put to the running train; the prayer would be like a road near the sea-shore ending in a sharp precipice. It is comely that prayer should rise to, and close with, praise. We feel strongly that evil should not be honoured with the last word. We like to finish with a glad Hallelujah and Amen. At least it is certain that the early Christians closed the Lord's Prayer

with these words, and we cannot err in imitating them.

These words contain an Argument, a Creed or Confession of Faith, and a Hallelujah. I use them as a reasoner, a believer, and an adorer. This will be our order—

A Creed; an Argument; and a Hallelujah.

I. OUR CREED.

A creed is what I believe: it comes from the Latin word *credo*, I believe. This creed has three parts. I believe that the kingdom is God's, and that it is His for ever. It is *the* Kingdom, the one real Kingdom: no other deserves the name. Napoleon, when a prisoner on the lonely isle of St Helena, thought a great deal about Christ. He used to place His Kingdom alongside of other kingdoms. He mused sadly upon the kingdoms of Alexander the Great, Cæsar, etc. They were all built on force, and they all passed away. His own kingdom was one of the greatest the world had seen; but it had crumbled into ruins, and he, its king, was a wretched prisoner, always quarrelling with his keepers about petty trifles. Christ had used no force. His was an empire of truth and love; and millions were ready to die for Him. And how low the mighty Napoleon

was brought! After his death, his heart was taken from his body to be embalmed. Napoleon's friends were eager to have the honour of guarding it. The Scotch doctor who had charge of Napoleon, took the heart into his bedroom, put it in a bason filled with water, covered it with a towel, locked the door, and kept the candle burning. He was waked by a splashing sound, and at once seized his revolver. Two or three rats were contending for the heart of the mightiest monarch of this century, whose footsteps seemed to shake the world. I have the best authority for this story.

And the Kingdom is God's *for ever*. I have read that, some forty years ago, there were fourteen discrowned kings in Europe. The Queen of the Sandwich Islands had two pictures of French kings—Louis Philippe and Napoleon III.—which were sent her as tokens of alliance with France. In each case the king was reigning when the picture was shipped, and discrowned before it reached the Sandwich Islands.

The pages of history are dotted over with the ruins of once mighty empires. Only that which is for ever can satisfy us—

“The Good, the True, the Pure, the Just.

Take the charm ‘for ever’ from them, and they crumble into dust.”

And Thine, O God, is the power : I believe and confess this. All I have said about the Kingdom can be said about the power of God. The Kingdom is just God's power in action and manifestation. All power is from God, and man's power at its best cannot be compared with His. How mad, then, it is for a perishing, sinful man to resist God ! He must be the most miserable and foolish of men who opposes his will to God's, and rushes against the thick bosses of Jehovah's buckler. The bare idea of it should fill us with horror.

And I confess that Thine, O God, is the glory. But what is glory ? I can hardly tell you. The word for it in the Bible means weight, substance, reality as opposed to all that is light and unreal and worthless. It is the eternally real as opposed to the seeming and the fleeting : it is the sum of all that is grand and wonderful. When I have used all the great words I know, I feel that there is something which towers far above them all ; and that I call glory.

If God's is "*the* glory," then it follows that man's "chief end" must be "to glorify God." Having such a chief end, what a great thing it is to be a man, when a man knows himself and his God-given origin and end.

One day, more than a hundred years ago, a thoughtless young Scottish noblewoman

happened to be humming to herself the words which greet us on the first page of the Shorter Catechism—"Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him for ever." "How grand that is," she said to herself, "and how little and mean my chief end in life has been!" It was the parting of the ways with her, and we have still churches and missions which are the memorials of Lady Glenorchy's piety.

We have here also

II. AN ARGUMENT.

It is brought in by the argumentative word *FOR*. I wish you to lay great stress on that little word. I once heard a famous advocate pleading. What surprised me most in his great speech—the only part of it I now remember—was the amazing force he threw into the word *for*. I felt for the moment that I must yield to his pleading. That word *for* has to do with logic and arguments: it leads you to expect good reasons.

God, pitying our fears and doubts, fills our mouth with arguments. "Come now," He says, "and let us reason together," or, as the words mean, "reason it out." So reason that God's reason will win the day. He wishes us to pray as reasoners, who put things together,

who lay hold on His promises, and draw from them all the help they offer us.

Notice that we have here three pleas. Prayer is pleading. We pray first for the things of God: Hallowed be Thy name, Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done. Like leal-hearted children, we pray first for the things of Our Father in heaven. After that we pray for ourselves. We beg bread, pardon, guidance and deliverance. And then we add three pleas or reasons. We may paraphrase them thus: do this, O God, for it will help on Thy Kingdom; do this, for Thou art able; do this, for, while mine shall be all the good, thine shall be all the glory.

Examine these pleas which turn every part of our creed into encouragements. Our Father, Thine is the Kingdom. Christ has taught us to come to Thee as a Father and a King: O bless us in a fatherly and a kingly style.

We know how kings give. They don't give in a narrow, grudging way, studying paltry economy: they give with sovereign magnificence and generosity: they feel that they must give like a king. Cæsar said that no music was so pleasing to him as the requests of his friends. Nero, though he was so wicked and reigned only a short time, is known to have given to his friends gifts worth

about twenty millions of pounds sterling, which would then be worth one hundred millions. "Go thy way," said one of the Cæsars to a friend asking help, "the gifts thou askest are too small for Cæsar to give." There is no end to the beautiful stories of this kind which one could cull from the old world histories. Kings must king it: they must give after a kingly fashion: the greater the kingdom, the grander the king's gifts must be. And we may reverently apply all this to our prayers.

"Thou art coming to a King,
Large petitions with thee bring,
For His power and grace are such
None can ever ask too much."

Christ teaches us in the same way to rise from our earthly to our heavenly Father (Matth. vii. 9-11), from the less to the greater, or rather from the worse to the better and the best. This is how you are to reason—My father gives me good gifts every day I live, and he does so gladly: can I believe for a moment that God is less kind than he is? Do you think that God's love can't compete with your father's, that the creature can surpass the creator, that the drop can be greater than the ocean? Your reason is to take all the good that is in your father, and make out of it a ladder by which

you may rise to your Father in Heaven. You completely trust your father: can you distrust God? He blesses you every day in the least things: will He keep back from you the greatest of all? Without any fear you ask gifts of your father: are you to be fearful when you ask God for the gifts He has promised to give you? Keep yourself in the love of God, and cold distrust will fall off from you as winter's snow thunders down the mountain side when the summer's sun kisses it.

Another plea Christ gives you is, "For Thine is the power." Let it not seem, O God, that Satan is stronger than Thou. Your soul nestles in the power of God; for it is all in your Father's hand.

The third argument in our prayer is, "For Thine is the glory." Christ prayed, "Father, glorify Thy Son that Thy Son also may glorify Thee." All that is good in a son adds to the fame of a father, and all the good in us we get from God. We can thus glorify God only in so far as our prayers are answered.

These closing words form also

III. OUR HALLELUJAH.

This is an Hebrew word, which means "praise ye the Lord," or "intensely and greatly praise ye the Lord." It has the

same meaning as doxology, which is literally a saying of praise or an ascription of glory. Hosanna has nearly the same meaning: it is "a kind of holy hurrah." You all know, you see, a little Hebrew.

This lofty song of praise is made up of wonder, admiration, gratitude, delight and adoration. Like the incense used in the temple, it is a compound of many sweet essences. The Hallelujah has in it wonder. Everyone of you should be like "Alice in Wonderland." It is a pity that "use lessens marvel." We are apt to be like the fishes, which, according to the poet, cried, "O where is the sea?" Wonders become like the air, which we seldom notice, though we could not live without it. This world is a wonderland; our lives hold millions of wonders; and the Bible opens to us the most wonderful world of all. And these wonders should fill us with admiration; for everyone of them is a masterpiece of God's skill. Admiration should rise to gratitude, for all these miracles are for us; they all minister to our being and well being. Gratitude begets delight in every heart in which it dwells, and it should always rise to adoration. The mother tongue of adoration is Hallelujah. Adoration must out, in such words as these, "For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory." Our adoration

should be fluent and copious like those streams which are fed by deep hidden fountains. Mr Gladstone on his deathbed was ever humming to himself hymns of adoration. His life closed with Hallelujahs.

The Book of Psalms is full of Hallelujahs. You usually find one closing and crowning each Psalm. David often begins with plaint and prayer, but he usually prays himself into praise. The Book of Psalms has nothing but praise at its close. Like the Lord's prayer, it ends with Hallelujah, Amen. Each of the last five Psalms begins with Hallelujah, and the last Psalm has six verses and twelve Hallelujah's. The Book of Revelation resounds with Hallelujahs. The Lord's Prayer begins and ends with Hallelujah, for "hallowed be Thy name" is really a Hallelujah. God's folk are a rejoicing folk, a singing folk, and a praising folk. "Prayer and thanks," says an old writer, "are like the double motion of the lungs; the air that is sucked in by prayer, is breathed out again by thanks."

Praise is comely even in our darkest days. I have seen a caged lark in a poor house. A caged lark rarely sings; it so regrets the green fields, its liberty, and the glorious sunshine. But this lark sang as if its very heart would burst. Its song was its salvation. Had it been sullenly dumb, it would likely have pined

away and soon died. The spirit of praise keeps the soul healthy and glad even when it is caged in a miserable and narrow lot. The poorest man on earth has mercies enough for making numberless Hallelujahs.

Organs have stops which are called vox celestis, and vox angelica, the voice heavenly and the voice angelical. Praise is the most heavenly and angelical voice on earth; for it is the beautiful flower and ripe fruit of the Christian life. Prayer is selfish, or at least for ourselves; but praise forgets self and brings all its homage to God. Praise is thus the worship of the angels and of saints made perfect.

Again, prayer is for our short earthly lives only, but praise is eternal as its material. We enter into the happiest life on earth through the gates of praise. On a student's song-book I read in golden letters some Latin words, which mean, "Let us therefore rejoice while we are young." He who learns in youth to sing God's praise with the heart, may rejoice both while he is young and while he is old. Michelet says that all singing birds live in the sun, fill themselves with it, and are inspired by it. Their world is the world of light. Only those hearts can sing God's praise that keep themselves in the light and love of God.

Prayer leads us to heaven's gate and there tunes the soul for praise. God's people in heaven and on earth are one family, and they have the same family song. Those on earth sing it poorly, often amid tears and with cold hearts, and always with marred music; but still they sing it as they can, and once inside the Golden Gate, they shall join the heavenly choir and sing it with perfect harmony.

Wm. Arnot, the preacher, conducted a service on board when crossing the Atlantic. A short time before, they had passed through a very black thunder-cloud. He imitated the great Teacher in His use of every-day incidents. He told them that when the cloud lay behind them, it was bright with glory, while the sun that brightened it also lightened up the way to their desired haven. So, he told them, the Sun of Righteousness brightens the clouds which sometimes gather around the Christian, and also makes a golden path for them right to their Father's House.

These are good words to die with. Wm. Burns, the famous missionary to China, lay a-dying, in a comfortless inn in New Chang. With his last breath, he said, "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever, Amen."

Praise ye the Lord, both young men and maidens, old men and children: let them

praise the name of the Lord, for His name alone is excellent, His glory is above the earth and heaven. He also exalteth the horn of His people, the praise of all His saints, even of the children of Israel, a people near unto Him. Praise ye the Lord.

No. XIII

OUR AMEN, OR GOD'S AMEN-FOLK

“When ye pray say . . . Amen.”

—*The Lord's Prayer.*

And let all the people say, Amen, Hallelujah.

(Ps. cvi. 48, margin).

AMEN seems to many to be merely a pulpit word, like the *Finis* at the end of a book, or the flourish which a boy makes with his pen at the bottom of his copy-book. We seldom ask ourselves what it means. To the Jew, however, it was radiant with meaning, and among the early Christians it was like a Freemason's password. It is a Hebrew word which has passed into all languages where the Bible is known. It is a word by itself and cannot be translated. It means truth. Isaiah (lxv. 16) speaks of “the God of truth:” what he says is “the God of Amen.” It is a favourite word with Christ. He uses it no less than a hundred and three times in the gospels, it is said. Twenty-five times He begins a sentence with *Amen, Amen* which is translated, *Verily, verily*. It is also

a name of Christ Himself. He calls Himself "the Amen," that is, the Eternal Truth. And this mysterious word has travelled round our globe with the name of Christ. A friend of mine, a minister, had a pious sailor in his Congregation. His ship was wrecked on one of the South Sea Islands. They feared that the Islanders were cannibals, and they expected to be killed, and cooked, and eaten. When they saw the natives gathering, they all fell on their knees, and this old sailor began to pray. The natives came and knelt beside them. When the sailor closed his prayer with Amen, the natives said Amen too. The sailors received a Christian welcome. I heard an African convert singing one of his own hymns. The people did not understand a word of it till he came to the end of each verse. He then sang, Hallelujah, Amen, and all present joined in the refrain. The tongues of mortals are many, but the tongue of the immortals is one. So far as Amen is concerned, mortals have only one tongue.

At the beginning of a sentence or the close of a creed, Amen means "So it is," "it is true." When a Methodist shouts Amen in the middle of a sermon, he means, "that is true, I agree with that." At the close of a prayer or creed, Amen means "So be it:" it then expresses a desire: it is "the seal of

prayer." "As your Amen is," says Martin Luther, "so has been your prayer." In Amen we thus find solemn assent, whole hearted consent, and eager desire.

Martin Luther calls "the faithful" in the Old Testament "the Amen-folk." It is a very fine and a literal translation. Amen is the root of their name: they are literally "the Ameners," or "the Amening," or "the Amenists;" those who are always saying Amen. It is thus right to call them God's Amen-folk. I wish to tell you why they deserve this name. Some speak of putting our religion into a nut-shell: I am to put it into a word: I am to explain a Christian's character and life by this word Amen.

The religion of Christ has four parts: it has to do with promises, precepts, providences, and a plan of God—this division, you see, has been made for memory. The faithful man says Amen to each of these. His is a religion of faith, for he says Amen to the promises. It is a religion of obedience, for he says Amen to the precepts. It is a religion of submission, for he says Amen to the providence of God. And it is a religion of Missions, for his prayer is, "And let *all* the people say Amen." These four Amens—the Amen of faith, of obedience, of submission, and of missions—make him one of God's Amen-folk.

I. THE AMEN OF FAITH.

Bible promises are like the stars in an Eastern sky for multitude and brightness. But the promises do not come to me one by one; for they are all summed up in Jesus Christ. "In Him all the promises of God are Yea and Amen." Christ is God's Amen, and He is to draw forth my Amen and my Hallelujah. It is to be a glad, whole-souled Amen, having in it the assent of the understanding and the consent of the heart. When Dr Inglis was translating the Bible into the language of Anyteum, he came to the word "believe." He searched long for the native phrase for it. At last he was told that there was no native word for trust or love in the whole island: they had not the thing, and they had no useless words. One day he saw a baby leaning upon its mother's breast. A happy flash of genius lighted up his mind, "I have found it," he said. "Here is the missing word. I shall get the word for a baby leaning on its mother, and it shall go into the Bible for believing or trusting."

Dr Inglis was keeping as close as close could be to the idea of faith in the Bible. Amen means what is true, real, and solid as opposed to all shams, shadows, cheats, and hearsays. The Hebrews made two verbs out

of Amen, the one means to bear up firmly as a rock bears up a house ; the other means to lean safely upon as a house leans upon a rock. And this second verb is their word for believing or trusting. It is also their word for a child leaning upon its mother. "And Naomi took the child, and laid it in her bosom, and became nurse unto it." (Ruth iv. 16). The very word is, she *amen*ed it: she bore the little weakling up in her warm, strong bosom ; she encircled it with her arms. Moses asks (Numbers xi. 12), Can I carry this people in my bosom "as a nursing father beareth the sucking child?" Nursing father there is an *Amening* father, one on whom the child can lean all his weight, and so find perfect rest and safety. A new-made mother thus describes her husband and the child on her breast :—

"My life is hid with him in Christ,
Never thencefrom to be enticed ;
And in his strength have I such rest
As when the baby on my breast
Finds what it knows not how to seek,
And, very happy, very weak,
Lies, only knowing all is well,
Pillow'd on kindness palpable."

Watch that little baby : that is God's great object-lesson, parable, and picture of faith. Your soul is as a little child, and it can

find rest only when it nestles in the bosom of God's infinite mercy in Christ Jesus. The child is born to go out of itself, to cling, to lean, and to depend on another. The Apostle John had a name which meant "the leaner on the breast." Like him, you should be a leaner. We are to do intelligently and with purpose what the babe does instinctively.

"Jesus, Lover of my soul,
Let me to thy bosom fly."

The child's hymn puts it well—

"Safe in the arms of Jesus,
Safe on his gentle breast,
There by his love o'ershadowed
Sweetly my soul would rest."

All the promises of God are clothed in flesh and blood, and come to you in Christ. True faith is not belief in the words of a dead Lord, but hearty reliance on a living Saviour. Christ waits for your consent and response. Let it be Amen, Hallelujah. And let your Amen be an everlasting Amen.

II. THE AMEN OF OBEDIENCE.

Like the promises, the [^]precepts also are found in Christ. He is both Saviour and Lord. If I grasp His cross, I should also bow before His sceptre. If I do not consent to His precepts, I cannot consent to His promises.

I shall take an illustration from a story which is found in several American books. Daniel Webster was once asked at a dinner-party, "What is the greatest idea that ever entered your mind?" After a pause he replied, "The greatest idea that ever entered my mind is the idea of personal responsibility to a personal God." With great feeling and eloquence he explained how this idea was fitted to touch and ennoble every part of a man's life. One who was present says that all the guests ceased eating, and were charmed with Mr Webster's eloquence.

Let me understand the great truth of personal responsibility to a personal God; let it come to me from the lips of Christ; let me welcome it with all my heart; let me count this responsibility my privilege and glory; let me salute it with my intelligent Amen and Hallelujah, and then it will be to me the grandest idea that ever entered the mind of man. But if this responsibility seems to me a harsh, stern thing, if I sullenly yield to it only because I must, it cannot then be the greatest idea that ever entered the mind of man. All depends on this—do I welcome it with an intelligent, glad, and life-long Amen?

You know that popular song, "The Lost Chord." It begins,

“ Seated one day at the organ,
I was weary and ill at ease,
And my fingers wandered idly
Over the noisy keys.
I know not what I was playing,
Or what I was dreaming then,
But I struck one chord of music
Like the sound of a great Amen.”

For a few moments that chord wrought
wonders in the player's soul. But the song
ends in a plaint,

“ I have sought, but I seek it vainly,
That one lost chord divine,
Which came from the soul of the organ,
And entered into mine.
It may be that Death's bright angel
Will speak in that chord again,
It may be that only in heaven
I shall hear that grand Amen.”

The Amen which the Christian soul gives
to all the promises and precepts of God is
unlike the Amen of mere poesy. For him
it is no lost chord, but the ruling and abiding
chord in the music of his life now and here.
It is not merely a sweet sound, it is a well
understood creed.

The obedience God wants is the obedience
of free choice and love. Mackay of Uganda
said one day, “ With me it is duty before
pleasure.” At once he corrected himself,
“ No, that is not it; with me duty is pleasure.”

He had said both Amen and Hallelujah to all the commandments. His soul had grown soft and supple to God's will. To him duty was joy, and law love. The hymn says,

"I'll sing upon a happier shore,
Thy will be done."

Sing it now, and you'll make this shore happier. There is, or may be, for you a happy land, not far far away.

This spirit makes all the difference in the world. For example, I know one who, when a schoolboy, used to say, "I hate books, I hate them with all my heart, and I shall never do anything but hate them as long as I live." But he found out that books could give real pleasure, and that without their help he could never fill the place for which he was intended. Since he made that discovery, the happiest hours of his life have been spent among books. In the same way millions who hated God's laws have found that only in obeying them can they find a glad and satisfying life; and they now daily give their response to them in these two venerable words, Amen, Hallelujah. Theirs is the old prayer, "Give, Lord, what Thou biddest, and bid what Thou wilt."

III. THE AMEN OF CHILDLIKE SUBMISSION.

By providences we mean chiefly the ills and trials of life. To some of these it is very hard to say Amen, and it seems impossible to add Hallelujah. Yet Christ has taught us to pray "Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven." Christ has taught us this prayer also by His example; for in Gethsemane He Himself used the prayer He has given us. "Father" . . . He then prayed, "Thy will be done." None can know how hard this prayer sometimes is till they have had to say farewell to those they love best. Under such trials some rebel against God. Of all the miserable people I have met with, they, I think, are the most miserable. How vain and mad this rebellion! When a sore trial came to him, Jeremy Taylor said, "I must bear this affliction inevitably, and by God's grace I shall try to bear it nobly." Bear it we must when it comes: the only question for us is whether we shall bear it nobly. If God be God and man man, then we must submit. "Submission," some one has said, "is the whole of religion." Yes, but there are many kinds of submission. Some have a sullen, *dour* submission, as when one submits to the cutting off of his diseased arm that his life may be saved, as a lassoed horse submits when it is worn out, as a wild caged

eagle submits when it has broken its feathers and dyed them with its gore by dashing madly against the wires of its cage. The submission of God's Amen-folk is childlike: they try to bear all in the spirit which says, "Our Father which art in heaven." One day I visited a very poor afflicted widow, whose only child had just been laid in the grave. Everything she cared for on earth had been taken from her, she told me. "I mourn," she said, "but I try not to murmur." She was saying Amen, though she could not then add her hallelujah. In Lord Tennyson's *Life*, I have just been reading that the form of prayer he used in trouble was, "O Thou Infinite, Amen." This word brings a Sabbath into the soul.

A writer in one of our Magazines tells that he one day witnessed the examination of a Deaf and Dumb School. In a moment of forgetfulness, the examiner wrote this question on a little girl's slate, "Why did God make you deaf and dumb?" The girl wrote underneath, "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." Neither man nor angel could have given a better answer than that.

When preparing this sermon I was reading the last pages of a book called "*Amiel's Journal*." He gives us all his thoughts and feelings as death came upon him: he wrote

on till death numbed his fingers. Speaking of his death he says, "we have but to say 'Amen'!" "It is simply an Amen of submission,"—"My child, give Me thy heart." Think how different is the death of a man who has no sweet un murmuring faith. One great man confesses that his heart had been torn by savage indignation, and that he would die in a rage, like a poisoned rat in a hole. Shortly before his execution, Donald Cargill, the martyr, wrote to a fellow-sufferer, "Farewell, dearest friend, never to see one another any more till at the right hand of Christ. Fear not, and the God of mercies grant a full gale, and a fair entry into His kingdom, which may carry sweetly and swiftly over the bar, that you find not the rub of death." These beautiful words might easily have suggested all that is in Tennyson's last poem, "Crossing the Bar."

When death comes, the Amen-folk have no new thing to try, no strange word to learn. All their life long they have been saying Amen to the holy will of their Father; and when they get the signal for their home-going they have only to repeat the oft used word Amen. Acts of childlike submission have made habits, and habits have become a second nature, and for that new nature it is easy and natural to say Amen. Their whole life is in that one

strange word. Practise this Amen as you practise a high note in music.

When the proconsul told Mascius Cyprian that he was to be put to death by the sword, he lifted up his voice, and said Amen.

In December last, Mr Pilkington, a missionary with our soldiers in the Soudan, was shot down by the Arabs. Aloni, his native boy, saw that the wound was mortal.

"My master, you are dying; death has come," said he.

"Yes, my child, it is as you say," replied Mr Pilkington.

"My master, he that believeth in Christ, though he die, yet shall he live."

"Yes, my child, it is as you say—shall *never* die."

That was his way of saying Amen.

"If I die, I die unto the Lord, Amen": these were the last words of Edward Irving. When R. L. Stevenson died a reviewer wrote that the words which Stevenson applied to one of his characters were true of himself—"He spoke not much of his religion in dying. His silent death was, like his life, an Amen to God's will." But why should the Amen be silent in life and death? It may be smothered for want of fresh air. Religion is to be entertained, but not imprisoned, in the heart.

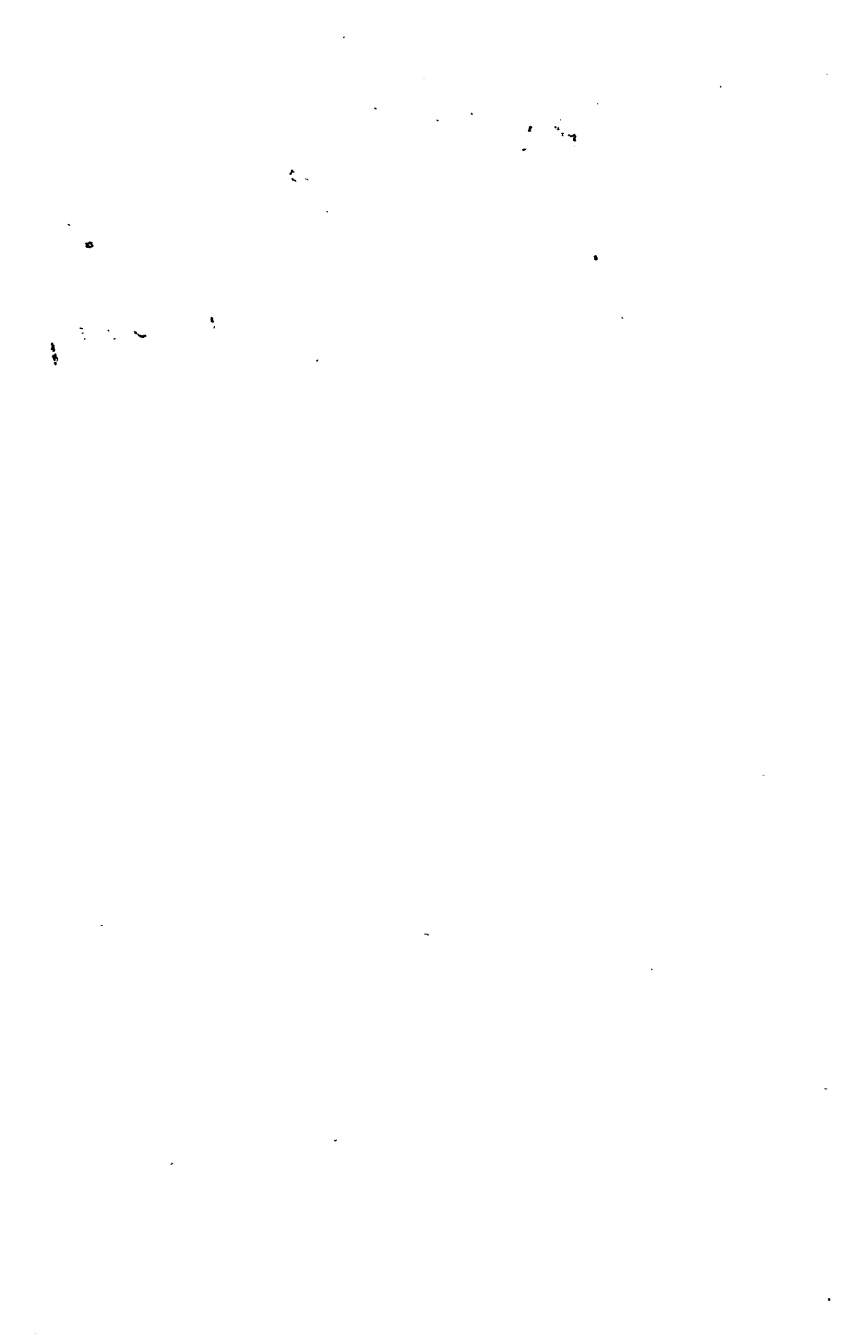
And silence does not always give consent. David desires a spoken Amen: "And let all the people *say* Amen." And Christ also desires an audible Amen: "When ye pray *say*, 'Our Father . . . Amen.' God's Amen-folk should not be a dumb folk. Browning in presence of death, added Hallelujah to his Amen when he wrote, 'Let us greet the Unseen with a cheer.'"

IV. THE AMEN OF MISSIONS.

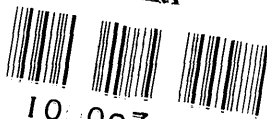
For God has a plan for each of His folk and for the whole church. That plan lies at the foundation of the Lord's Prayer, to each petition of which we are to say, Amen. It is revealed in the third petition, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," and also in our text, "Let *all* the people say Amen." It is the plan of missions, whose aim is to get all the children of human kind to take up and re-echo this grand Amen. He who truly repeats the Lord's Prayer must be a missionary in his sympathies: he must long for the day when all on earth shall own Christ as Saviour and Lord: he is a man of desires; and one of his chief desires is, that man's response to God should be like that in some of the early churches where, we are told, the Amens of the people were like a peal of

thunder, or like the noise of the waves in full tide dashing upon the shore. The sound, Jerome says, made the hollow idols quiver and shake.

God's Amen-folk often say Amen on earth with difficulty. Sometimes it comes from a half-protesting heart, and is mixed with tears. But when they reach heaven, they shall join the great throng who, without one drawback, praise God with their Amens and Hallelujahs. God grant that you may be one of God's Amen-folk on earth, and so have a place in that blessed company. Amen and Amen.



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